UPPER WORLD

natural sphere | human sphere | natural sphere

altitude of birds' flight

INTERMEDIATE WORLD

sacral | sacral | sacral | sacral | sacral

height of trees

forest

settlement

warm sea or lake

icy sea

water

thawed earth

frozen earth

water

LOWER WORLD

upper (life)

south (life) ← → north (death)

lower (death)

Studies on Ob-Ugric Culture

Also published in the Schmidt Éva Könyvtár series:

1. *Jelentések Szibériából.* Mária Sipos (ed.) MTA Nyelvtudományi Intézet – Néprajzi Kutatóintézet, Budapest, 2005.

2. *Nyelv, nyelvjárás, írásbeliség, irodalom.* Mária Sipos & Julianna Rusvai (eds.). MTA Nyelvtudományi Intézet, Budapest, 2006.

3. *Serkáli osztják chrestomathia.* László Fejes (ed.). MTA Nyelvtudományi Intézet, Budapest, 2008.

4. *Anna Liszkova énekei.* Katalin Lázár & Mária Sipos (eds.). MTA Nyelvtudományi Intézet – MTA Zenetudományi Intézet, Budapest, 2008.

5. *Medvekultusz.* Mária Sipos (ed.). MTA Nyelvtudományi Intézet, Budapest, 2011.

6. *Tanulmányok az obi-ugor folklór köréből.* Márta Csepregi (ed.). HUN-REN Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont– HUN-REN Nyelvtudományi Kutatóközpont, Budapest, 2023.

7. *Lemenő nap arany hajfonata ha kibomlik...* Andrea Kacskovics-Reményi & Mária Sipos (eds.). HUN-REN Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont – HUN-REN Nyelvtudományi Kutatóközpont, Budapest, 2024.

8. *Nyelv, kultúra, revitalizáció.* Márta Csepregi (ed.). HUN-REN Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont– HUN-REN Nyelvtudományi Kutatóközpont, Budapest, 2025.

9. *Cobolyprém gyönyörűséges imát honnan vesznek?* Andrea Kacskovics-Reményi & Mária Sipos (eds.). ELTE Humán Tudományok Kutatóközpontja – ELTE Nyelvtudományi Kutatóközpont, Budapest, 2025.

Schmidt Éva Könyvtár 10.

STUDIES ON OB-UGRIC CULTURE

A Selection of Éva Schmidt's Publications

Edited by:
Márta Csepregi and Mária Sipos

Table of Contents

A Look at the Life's Work of Éva Schmidt
Through Thirteen Lenses

Éva Schmidt (1948–2002) was a Hungarian ethnologist, folklorist, linguist, and field researcher of Ob-Ugric languages and traditions (Khanty and Mansi, previously known as Ostyak and Vogul). She first traveled to Siberia in 1970 as a student, and by that point she had already gained a thorough familiarity with the Ob-Ugric academic literature. Her first expedition was followed by several more (in 1971, 1980, and 1982), which was a nearly miraculous feat at the time, given that the Soviet Union did not allow foreign researchers into the country for fieldwork. She spent the last decade of her life in Western Siberia, running the folklore archive she had founded.[1] Her work significantly contributed to the survival of the Ob-Ugric peoples and the preservation of their language and culture.[2]

The purpose of this book is to bring awareness to the international academic community of Éva Schmidt's rich body of work. With this in mind, we have selected thirteen of her 170 publications so as to cover the broadest scope of her research. This selection is organized into categories based on the following topics: introductory works meant to educate the public about the Ob-Ugric peoples, the history of research within the field, mythology, folklore studies, and cultural revitalization. Despite the groupings, these categories sometimes overlap. In all of her writings, Éva Schmidt reflected on the work of earlier researchers and supplemented it with the knowledge she had gained through her own fieldwork. In her work collecting source materials, as well as in her theoretical research on mythology and folklore, she never forgot the ultimate goal: promoting the survival of Ob-Ugric ethnic culture. Her activities in Western Siberia served this goal, as did her educational writings intended for the public, whether they appeared in the local Khanty-language newspaper or in Hungarian cultural journals.

In a previous article,[3] I applied physicist Albert-László Barabási's network theory to analyze Éva Schmidt's role within academic life and Ob-

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[1] See pages 249–256 of this book for a history of the archive and its activities.

[2] Further information about her life and work can be found on the website introducing her research: https://schmidt-eva-archivum.nytud.hu. The website also provides a brief introduction to the Ob-Ugric peoples: https://schmidt-eva-archivum.nytud.hu/projekt/obi-ugorok.

[3] Márta Csepregi: The very highly connected nodes in the Ob-Ugrian networks. In: Jussi Ylikoski (ed.) *The Quasquicentennial of the Finno-Ugrian Society.* (Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne 258.) 9–32. http://www.sgr.fi/sust/sust258/sust258_csepregi.pdf

Ugric communities. In his 2002 book, Barabási introduced the concept of the "very highly connected node" into the field of network science.[4] One of the characteristic features of these nodes is that the more connected they are, the more easily they create new connections. Éva Schmidt was one such node.

This book highlights only a few aspects of her densely woven network. In her educational writings, she offered Hungarians a way to connect with their closest linguistic relatives, the Ob-Ugric peoples. With her popular, engaging writing style, her essays opened a door to a previously unknown world, informed not just by academic literature but also her own personal experience in the region. Furthermore, she was the researcher who personally bridged the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Her work also connected European and Soviet-Russian research traditions. Not only did she continue the work of the nineteenth-century fieldwork researchers, including Antal Reguly (1819–1858), Bernát Munkácsi (1860–1937), and József Pápay (1873–1931), but she also made the materials that these researchers had collected available to the native peoples themselves. Continuing the metrical analysis by Wolfgang Steinitz (1905–1967) and Robert Austerlitz (1923–1994) of nineteen songs, she supplemented and completed this work with her own analysis of 200 songs from her own collection ("The Other Side of Khanty Metrics," pp. 221–236). In researching the genres of folklore, she contrasted her own experiences with earlier perspectives ("Trends in 20th Century Ob-Ugric Oral Tradition," pp. 189–219, and "Plot Types and Function of the Song-Folktale Genre in Northern Khanty Folklore," pp. 237–246). In her comprehensive work introducing the Ob-Ugric bear cult ("Bear Cult and Mythology of the Northern Ob-Ugrians," pp. 87–151), she relies on the research of Valerij Černecov (1905–1970), among others. She developed a personal friendship with Nikolaj Terëškin (1913–1986), the first researcher who was himself a Khanty native speaker. Terëškin entrusted Éva Schmidt with his own handwritten collection, which serves as the record of a dialect no longer spoken.

It was also in her work as a collector of folklore that Éva Schmidt served as an intermediary between the researchers and informants of the nineteenth century and the contemporary singers of the time, as she had in fact collected a repertoire that carried over from generation to generation. She gathered several hundreds of hours' worth of audio recordings, part of which she transcribed, translated, and annotated, supplementing the material with

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[4]   Barabási, Albert-László 2002. *Linked: The New Science of Networks*. New York: Perseus.

detailed linguistic notes and cultural explanations. One such example is the 418-line song that appears in this book ("A Khanty Bear Song from the Little Sos′va," pp. 153–185), which tells the story of how the bear, with its divine origins in heaven, ended up on Earth.

When she founded the first Ob-Ugric archive, Éva Schmidt was already thinking in terms of network building. Soon after, five new institutions in the region quickly sprang up, but the archive in Belojarskij served as the central hub for all of the Ob-Ugric revitalization efforts. Thanks to Éva Schmidt's organizing work, intellectual life began to flourish in the Ob region. Through her efforts, Ob-Ugric people who lived far apart and spoke distinct dialects could meet one another, and under her influence the younger generation could connect with their roots. At the turn of the century, she dreamed up a new, more far-reaching plan: she wanted to collect linguistic data and folklore from the remaining speakers of extant dialects, through an effort covering the entire Ob region. The theoretical foundations of this project are outlined in "The Archetype of the 'Archive'" (pp. 257–275). She worked on the practical implementation of archival questions up until the very last day of her life.[5]

The afterlife of Éva Schmidt's writings and activities

The selected works in this book were originally published within a 20-year period that spanned from 1981 to 2001. Readers may be interested to know what became of the publications that Éva Schmidt reviewed and how the initiatives she began have continued.

When she wrote "Thoughts from the Field on the Heroic Age of the Khanty People and of Khanty Studies" (pp. 29–52), Éva Schmidt did not have access to the original text from Reguly's journals, which is now available online in multiple languages.[6] In "József Pápay's Khanty Collection and Its Ethnographic Considerations" (pp. 53–60), she discusses the first volume of a planned series. József Pápay's manuscripts, which had not previously been published, were reproduced in facsimile editions in an eight-volume series published over the course of ten years.[7] Based on the first thin volume, Éva Schmidt wrote a comprehensive, promising study. The difficult-to-read manuscript, however, daunted many potential readers. Recently, a young

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[5]   https://schmidt-eva-archivum.nytud.hu/assets/publications/71.pdf
[6]   https://regulyarchivum.hu/?__lang=en
[7]   Pápay, József & Edit Vértes 1988–1998. Pápay József osztják hagyatéka. Bibliotheca Pápayensis I–VIII. Debrecen.

researcher has undertaken to decipher Pápay's handwriting, so there is still hope that the linguistic and folklore treasures hidden in the texts will yet be revealed.

By the early 1980s, Éva Schmidt had already begun to consider the Mansi-language collection of Valerij Černecov ("The Bequest of V. N. Černecov's Mansi Folklore Collection," pp. 61–77). No expert in the Soviet Union could be found to analyze this material, and so the 1441-page handwritten collection made its way from the University of Tomsk to Budapest, to the Institute of Ethnology at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Éva Schmidt did exemplary work on this project. She created Russian annotations for each item, and to this day, these summaries can be found in the Mansi Folklore Archive in Berëzovo, according to N. V. Lukina.[8] In addition, Éva Schmidt also prepared a book's worth of folktales for publication. The publication of this work, however, was put on hold when she moved to Russia. A few of the texts can be found on the website of the University of Munich[9], although the site does not note that the person responsible for deciphering the handwritten materials was Éva Schmidt.

When the Northern Khanty Folklore Archive in Belojarskij was originally founded, the Hungarians and Russians agreed that all original audio and video recordings would remain in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug. Copies of these materials would be sent to Hungary, to Éva Schmidt's employer, the Institute of Ethnology at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In 2002, after Éva Schmidt's death, a copy of her collection was produced (360 hours of video, 400 hours of audio, and multiple volumes of notes and translations, and handwritten and digital files). The analysis of this work began in Hungary in 2022, when these materials became accessible.[10] Materials are being continuously added to the archive's website.

The Northern Khanty Folklore Archive in Belojarskij has undergone multiple reorganizations since 2002. Today it operates as a branch of the Ob-Ugric Institute of Applied Research and Development in Khanty-Mansijsk, and it was renamed in Éva Schmidt's honor in 2013. Since the retirement of the original staff, a new team has continued the work of collecting and analyzing source materials. Éva Schmidt's collection was

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[8] Н.В. Лукина 2017. Мансийские фольклорные тексты в архивном фонде В.Н. Чернецова (N.V. Lukina: Mansi folklore texts in the archive fund of V. N. Chernetsov). Вестник угроведения № 2 (29): 101–113. https://vestnik-ugrovedenia.ru/sites/default/files/vu/lukina_n.v_3.pdf

[9] https://www.babel.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/index.php?abfrage=all_mansi_corpus&subnavi=corpus_pub

[10] Éva Schmidt's Ob-Ugric collection was sealed for twenty years following her death.

transferred to Khanty-Mansijsk in 2006. Some of her recordings can be heard and/or viewed on the website of the Ob-Ugric Institute.[11] The team in Belojarskij is working on publishing three volumes based on her collection. The planned volumes include one featuring cultic songs, one containing Khanty folktales, and one showcasing non-folktale Khanty prose.

The last project that Éva Schmidt had planned was realized by Zoja Rjabčikova. Under her leadership, the Center for Ob-Ugric Dialects was created in 2002 within the auspices of the Yugra State University in Khanty-Mansijsk. Training and data collection began soon after. By the summer of 2003, an expedition was planned to the villages of Šuryškary District. Participants were assigned specific topics on which they completed lexical fieldwork, gradually learning the ins and outs of linguistic collection. An important part of the center's work was running summer camps for school-age children, where they had the opportunity to learn more about Khanty language and traditions. At the same time, volunteer collectors were always provided with technical supplies, training, and seminars. The work was expanded to cover all dialects of Khanty and Mansi.

Over the years, the institution went through multiple reorganizations, until 2011, when it was finally closed by the Yugra State University and its employees resigned. By then, Ob-Ugric language instruction at the university had also ceased. The collected materials (audio recordings, written transcripts of the material, completed questionnaires, and educational materials) are under Zoja Rjabčikova's guardianship. She is awaiting more favorable times when the work can continue.

Returning to Barabási's theory, the cited book explains that if nodes are removed at random, scale-free networks will not be damaged. But if it is the most highly connected nodes that are removed, the network will quickly collapse. This possibility was a real danger after Éva Schmidt's tragic death. Too many people and projects depended on her. We can only hope that Ob-Ugric communities have the strength to rebuild the connections of this network.

Stylistic notes

Minor formatting changes were made to the original publications in the course of translating these works and preparing them to be republished. In order to use footnotes consistently throughout, the endnotes in certain

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[11] https://folk.ouipiir.ru/cross-search?query=шмидт

articles have been changed to footnotes, and footnote numbering restarts within each article. We did not make significant modifications to the citations or references. Titles listed in Cyrillic have not been modified, and romanization follows the current system of scientific transliteration.[12] A few minor modifications to this system have been made: instead of *x*, we have used *kh*, and word-initial *e* appears as *je*. This approach to transcription reflects the same style used within the Éva Schmidt Archive website. A few exceptions have been made for well-known geographical names – the Ob River, Irtysh River, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Moscow, and Ekaterinburg – where we have opted instead for the common spelling.

In this book, the names of the two Ob-Ugric peoples appear in two different ways: under the exonyms Ostyak and Vogul, and under the endonyms Khanty and Mansi, the terms used by the peoples themselves. This dual naming convention is due to the fact that exonyms were in common use around the world in the twentieth century. The terms Ostyak and Vogul appear in the articles that Éva Schmidt originally published in English ("Bear Cult and Mythology of the Northern Ob-Ugrians" and "Trends in 20th Century Ob-Ugric Oral Tradition"). However, the articles that appear here for the first time in English translation use the endonyms Khanty and Mansi, in accordance with contemporary international practice.

In several of her publications, Éva Schmidt noted the Ob-Ugric population size at the time of writing. We did not modify these numbers. According to the most recent census of 2020, the current Khanty population stands at 31,467, with 44 percent who speak the Khanty language, or 13,900 people. There are currently 12,228 individuals who identify themselves as Mansi, 18 percent of whom report speaking the language, or a total of 2,229 people.[13]

Acknowledgements

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[12] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_transliteration_of_Cyrillic
[13] https://rosstat.gov.ru/vpn/2020

INTRODUCTORY WORKS

The Khanty and Mansi Peoples
(1983)

Khanty (Ostyak) and Mansi (Vogul) are two small, nearly dead branches of the Ugric language tree. When heard from several feet away, the sound of their speech resembles that of Hungarian. And their speakers are the reflection of ourselves, Hungarians, from 3,000 years ago… Indeed, we only learned of our closest relatives when it was almost too late, when they were already as mysteriously distant and on the verge of extinction as a native Canadian tribe. But long ago, we had begun keeping horses together, we had discovered the precious metals of the south together, we had offered our most beautiful steeds to the idols together, and we had sung together. After the difficult adolescence of our people, we Hungarians went searching for kin. Instead of glorious relatives, this is who we found. We became embarrassed and ashamed. But is it really better to be "the world's orphan" than to be the largest of the Finno-Ugric peoples?

Unfortunately, the Ugric family is mostly understood even today as a family, but as for what kinds of peoples it connects, that is beyond the imagination of those involved. We cannot imagine the things we have never experienced. For us, the Siberian taiga is unfathomable. In this landscape, you can travel for days before you come across a lonely hut. Bone-chilling winter lasts for half a year. You will find sables, elk, bears, and a Mansi hunter who sleeps under the snow, who wakes up alive 30 degrees below zero and easily composes songs hundreds of lines long. The old hunter can barely imagine a person for whom drooping blades of grass do not tell a story, a person who does not recognize the taste of raw salmon, or a person who does not face death every day. He cannot imagine these people who bump into each other at every turn, always hurrying and striving, despite having so much. They think in so many different ways but still borrow others' words when they sing. Of course, the old Mansi hunters are growing fewer and fewer, and even they listen to the radio; they know who János Kádár spoke with that day and whether the Hungarian national team has won. They are a little disappointed when they find out that not every Hungarian word does in fact sound like Mansi.

Today, as many people speak the Mansi language as the population of a small village: three and a half thousand. Speakers of Khanty number 17,000. Their harsh Siberian homeland is as large as half of Europe. It is from there that we get our life-sustaining petroleum and natural gas. Who would have thought that one day pipes would connect our lands and that liquid fire would flow from north to south? But we still have some similarities, like the fact that both of our peoples find it difficult to understand the terrifyingly rapid development of Western Siberia. From one year to the next, big cities emerge from the bottomless swampland, helicopters carry the mail, Globus-branded cans provide vitamins, and even the endless taiga and Ob River turn out not to be endless, after all. The Mansi youth, for whom hunting is just a pastime, wear jeans, listen to ABBA or Omega instead of laboriously composing songs, and don't insist on speaking a language that no one understands ten villages away. To these youth, the tragic history of our ancestors is like a dark fairy tale.

Although the old Mansi and Khanty approached the brink of extinction due to their difficult living circumstances and oppression under the czar, the originality of their spirit always impressed those Europeans seeking to get to know them better, including Hungarian and Finnish researchers. In them these researchers honored their own ancestors and the eternal man, whose word is like a polished gem even in the darkest of hopelessness. One of the oversights of Hungarian literary life is that, lacking established intermediaries, it failed to receive in time the "last true tribal poetry" from our relatives. In the age of the isms, the ancient source that enriched the artistic life of Europe was much closer to us than to Western peoples. We have not properly uncovered it yet and do not understand its value. So we try to make up for this oversight by giving a taste not only of the "pure source" but also of what has developed from it.

The folk poetry of our northern relatives is like the blanket of snow that covers their land for half of each year. To an outsider, it may sound monotonous, but to the initiated, not only does every curve of the surface carry meaning, but you can also feel the carpet of summer flowers underneath. This is a special aesthetic language and mode of communication, which not even their own youth can always understand. The Mansi and Khanty have never had folk songs in the European sense. Even if "readymade" lyrics existed, every word carried a magical power to shape destiny, addressed to their feared idols or to the bear, which was considered to be of divine origin. Their old singers performed thousands of lines of sacred stories like a Homeric epic, and their shamans served as intermediaries in ecstasy

between the supernatural and human worlds. As impressive as all of this was, they were not satisfied with it. Their poetry was never enough; in the end, what good is it if your brain and heart are empty? In the past, everybody worth something had to know how to compose poetry, how to express thoughts and feelings in a nuanced artistic fashion. The melodies were well known, but new ones could be created. They were not too complicated, often made up of only a single line and three or four notes, but, as if a demonic computer had designed them to be endless, it is almost physically painful to not continue them. They always demand new words. In a story, a father tells his son: "Make the long short." The boy later understands: He has to sing. The song makes it not just bearable but even pleasant to pass the days with rowing and sleigh rides, weaving nets, sewing, and waiting. It is a spiritual narcotic that makes you – to draw an example from civilization – feel disappointed the moment the bus finally pulls into the bus stop after half an hour of waiting for it. Songs are good for other things, too. When emotions run high and would otherwise break through social norms of behavior, the Mansi redirect their anger into improvised song. Poetry was a useful thing, a man-made protective empire in the middle of terrifying foreign forces: a necessity for life.

Once the topic and the melody were set, universally agreed upon rules of poetry ensured that true art would result. The topic was segmented and structured, the sentences broken into their building blocks as if by linguists. Every noun received a modifier, which thousands of nameless ancestral poets had worn into expressiveness. Postpositions and suffixes, like cheap oversimplifications, were left off, and the compression of images flourished in surrealistic forms. Phrases like "idol-eye-dark night," "lake-big-eyed (i.e., all-seeing) god," "sable-coat-soft prayer," "water-demon-destroyed riverbank," and similar were considered established expressions. Imagery and perceptibility at any cost. To make the effect more powerful, they duplicated lines by changing a few words, and with these rhymes, they created a rhyme structure similar to our own. To put the words to a melody required ensuring that the stress fell in the right place. To do so, they could change the number of syllables as they saw fit, or insert meaningless filler sounds. Compared to traditional European poetry, there were practically no limits on what topics could be featured; one could sing about almost anything.

The songs published here were composed recently by ordinary women, somewhat embarrassed that their songs were not as long and ornate as those of the past. One of them tells of the depopulation of the holy village of the life-giving goddess Kalteś, another recounts the fantastical story of the marriage between a girl and an idol-spirit, and a third was conceived in

the joy of welcoming long-awaited hunters who have finally arrived. In a society without the written word, only the most memorable songs could let a person live on for a few generations.

The thousand-year practice of poetry, it seems, was not in vain. Outstanding lyricists emerged from the first generation of Mansi and Khanty who learned to write. Juvan Šestalov, winner of the Gorky State Prize, perfectly combines the image-based thinking of his people and the expressiveness of the age of the shaman ancestors with the art of our current era. A universal talent: expressionist poems, lyrical novels, avant-garde plays, young adult adventure novels, and cultural critiques flow from his pen with astonishing (and clever) originality. He has traveled to Hungary many times and is one of the few who know and feel what is on both sides of our family ties. He would be comfortable even without the language of folklore. In his youth, he created Mansi literature of a European caliber, practically from one day to the next. In the old tradition there are endless forms with which you can express everything and create new, exciting meanings. He felt shaken at his father's funeral. The sacrifice of a horse (a literal sacrifice) awakened an ancient prayer, and with his second poem in his impotent grief, he warded off not just his father's protective spirit but also the traditional mode of expression. He who is master of both can do it…

Andrej Tarkhanov grew up in Siberia and has become a European intellectual. When he visited Hungary, many people could hardly believe he was not Hungarian. He belongs with us while at the same time, he guards the message of the taiga, the perspective of his hunter ancestors, and their musical words. Every moment anywhere on Earth stands before him, his impressionistic poems opening new depths. He does not intrude into the foreground but, with love, teaches others to see.

Interestingly, there were hardly any Mansi and Khanty prose writers at first, but their rich stories flowed as abundantly as the waters of the Ob River. And then, recently, from the most obscure countryside where hardly anyone ventures besides its native peoples, out came a Khanty boy, and in just a few years he captivated the readers of Western Siberia. Jeremej Ajpin is such a typical representative of this early culture that even if he were the only one we knew of, we would still get a good idea of what new Siberia is like from him. From the land of his birth, courtesy of his shaman ancestors, he could be the most exotic personality, but this role does not appeal to him. He takes on the more difficult challenge: intermediary between two worlds and chronicler of changes that have rarely happened before in history.

(English translation by Melinda Széll)

Anyone Can Be a Poet
(1981)

> *Sun of shafted arrow flight*
> *During its flight*
> *I thought up a song, I thought up a story,*
> *My ten-ribbed arched chest*
> *could not hide it, it overtook me…*

> (The Song of My Grandfather Tur)
> Translated from László Nagy's Hungarian translation

What kind of song draws strength from its author, as if coming to life on its own? Oh, that's simply the Pygmalion effect, you might say. Which creative person – and one need not even be a true artist – hasn't fallen under the spell of his or her own work, even for a short while? But this song is something else:

> *… little girl running down below,*
> *on her precious ears*
> *my song finds a spot,*
> *little boy running down below,*
> *on his precious ears,*
> *my tale finds a spot…*

The song irresistibly captures everyone: children and adults, men and women, the living and the dead. And, in fact, it can escape from anyone's mind, flying out through a person's mouth, and traveling off to faraway lands:

> *… The edge of the southern landscape that makes a bird fly –*
> *And from there it comes like a male bird of silk,*
> *befitting a treetop the height of a promontory*
> *its singing, its flight…*

Such is the Mansi song, and the Khanty as well. These are the songs of our closest linguistic relatives. When Hungarian researchers of the past century wanted to elicit sympathy for these pitied Siberian brothers coated in fish

oil, they would inevitably point to the richness of their folk poetry. Most of all, of course, they would mention the heroic epics that ran thousands of lines, the days-long bear ceremony – the kinds of works whose mere length, and not just their antiquity, would impress the average European. But now, when the days of idols, deified bears and entranced shamans are finally coming to an end, a different, unique tradition of theirs can inspire our recognition: personal songwriting.

Can anyone be a poet? Why not? At most, someone without talent will simply be a bad poet. Let's consider a poet to be a person who creates independent works that meet the poetic requirements of the time and culture and are accepted by society under his or her own name. The main historical tendency is that truly original works of art become professionalized, because the "commissioning" ruling class makes this possible. The artwork of the oppressed classes, however, contains a growing number of common features, their style becoming increasingly limited. The final result is, for example, Hungarian folk poetry, where the opportunity for personal composition is now only available in a few genres (mourning, lament, satirical). Singers usually receive "readymade" songs, and it is only in reshaping and reevaluating oral traditions that they have space for creative endeavors. And with traditional peasant culture just as much in decline as that of the shamans, folk poetry is not the most relevant example to point to. Today, when many people have become chronically passive consumers of mass media, and the more active members of society have thrown themselves into amateur activities, almost everything can be interpreted as a work of art, within the lack of clear formal and cultural norms of professional art. It is high time we look back to the period in which everyone could be a poet. Naturally, such cultures exist all over the world – everywhere that tribal or early social structures have survived. We are especially lucky that our closest linguistic relatives represent one of the best examples of this culture.

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So how does an everyday Mansi or Khanty person become a poet? First, we need to understand that the role and responsibility of the individual in tribal societies is greater than in later class-based societies. The hunter may appear to us as being especially individualistic. And no wonder – in his fight against nature and society, a frightening amount depends on his own luck and resourcefulness. His personal song, tied to his own name, is the artistic reflection of his own importance. It is not as though he lacks a readymade, or

even partially readymade, song that he could use instead. The rich cultic oral tradition is communal, as is European folk poetry. But to this day, a category corresponding to folk songs does not exist; songs about "secular" topics are composed by everyone, preferably about themselves.

There is, therefore, a tradition that requires anyone worth anything to compose songs. About what? That is open-ended (as in professional poetry), but convention tends to define genres by topic. Constraints of poetry, however, are strict and multilayered, and one would need several volumes to detail them.

To compose a song, the first thing one needs is a topic: some kind of extraordinary experience or the exact opposite: a deep dive into the generalities of everyday life. And, almost at the same time, a rhythm structure emerges, in the form of a one- or two-line traditional melody, partially readymade. The melodic phrases can be arranged at individual discretion, forming a solid two- or three-line structure based on local tradition, or by repeating the last portion until the sentence is complete. The lyrics and melody are developed simultaneously, and coordinating them is no easy task. The rhythm structure can vary, as can the number of syllables per line; only the number of beats is fixed. If the verse is not long enough for the melody, meaningless filler words and syllables or glissandi are used to stretch the line; if it is too long, ornamentation is used to extend the melody. Despite its monotony, the song is so varied that you never know what will happen in the next line, given all the possible strategies available. But all this is just the musical form, with the best part yet to come.

The deciding factor is whether the songwriter intends to create a lasting work of art or a fleeting improvisation. The former can be simple or complex. A simple song explores a basic subject, such as one's relationship to a group or person, a brief summary of daily activities, attachment to one's homeland, or a fleeting mood. More complex songs sum up the songwriter's entire life or an important life event, and in this way, the songwriter seeks a kind of brief immortality lasting only a few generations. There are two types of styles as well. The first is plain, requiring only that the song meet certain formulaic requirements. The second is a more elevated style that uses beautiful metaphors and symbols to describe reality on a higher aesthetic level, adopting certain elements of cultic poetry as needed. The content of these songs is subjective but always honest, even when this puts the songwriter in an uncomfortable position. Within the community, the songs serve as a sort of artistic identification for the songwriter.

Traditional metaphors and formulas are of great help to the songwriter in composing the lyrics, and these partially readymade lines – whose

modifiers, polished over centuries but nevertheless flexible – develop the song's imagery. A characteristic feature of poetry is parallelism – that is, the repetition of a line in which one or two words are swapped out for words with similar meanings. This is a kind of rhyme that extends to the entire line (but whether the lines have similar endings has no particular significance). Everyone can use parallelism to create simple rhyme structures as they see fit, alternating them with single lines. Popular strategies include wordplay using words derived from the same root and the use of unexpected alliteration. The composition can begin with ten to fifteen levels of coordination.

Let's suppose the topic is the lament of an unhappy life. Various parts of the song can be mentally organized into a compositional structure. One element of the current song is the fact that ever since the songwriter's younger brother died, she has not had anyone to visit in her home village. She divides these two facts into separate sentences. She wants to express herself in an elevated style, and so she forms poetic images out of both sentences, with the first relying on traditional elements and the second on novel elements. She selects a formula for the beginning of the second sentence and creates a similar parallel structure, creating an entirely new meaning. With repetition, she lengthens the lines that are too short, and she determines which lines require a parallel component, placing them in pairs and in a "cross-rhyme" structure. She addresses an additional series of questions, and the result is the following (in rough translation):

Little Leontij, my little sibling,
after the death of my little sibling,
my thick-branched tree supporting my back,
my thick-rooted tree supporting my chest,
I no longer have them.
My little village by the small mouth of the river
little portside village port,
oh, the large tree trunk has cut it off,
roadside village road
alas, a large tree trunk has grown to block it,
alas, I will not go, I will not go.

In this way, songs are often expanded into eighty to a hundred lines. As a kind of signature, composers identify themselves in the first line: "I, So-and-So, am singing…"

In the past, the opportunities for singing were similar to those for poetry: being in a state of emotional excitement, such as while drinking, or being in a very unstimulating environment, such as monotonous work,

long periods of waiting, or rowing or sledding for days on end. Song was a person's faithful companion through dire needs and grand ambitions alike. It transformed anger into art; it added color to unbearable bleakness. It instilled in everyone the vision and creative skills of an artist, and it honored and memorialized the songwriter.

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Siberia is developing at an unprecedented pace. The monotony of northern life is disappearing, and at the same time, the art of the personal song has been pushed to the other extreme: confined to drinking parties. Today's youth, raised on the achievements of civilization and modern music, look in bemused wonder at the researcher entranced by the drawn-out songs of the older generation. The songs' endless, recurring melodies and their evocative parallels enchant the researcher for days, and only the next song can drive them out of her mind. The researcher is learning to love something that before, because of its obvious ordinariness, barely merited any attention. Better late than never.

(English translation by Melinda Széll)

History of Ob-Ugric Research

Thoughts from the Field on the Heroic Age of the Khanty People and of Khanty Studies
(2001)

A change in perspective

The era of truly scientific study of Western Siberian peoples began in the mid-nineteenth century. This period is inseparable from two important figures of comparative historical Finno-Ugric studies: Matthias A. Castrén, a Finn, and Antal Reguly, a Hungarian. Their Finno-Ugric backgrounds differentiated them from earlier Russian researchers: they considered local languages to be equal conveyers of information, and they had a more complex understanding of the ethnic minorities they studied. In seeking out historical linguistic reconstructions, they used their own native languages and cultures as a basis for comparison, and they preferred to find similarities rather than differences.

With his research trip of 1844–1845, Antal Reguly became a founding father of Ob-Ugric linguistics and folklore studies. In his own day, he was considered a very strange researcher (not a researcher at all, in fact), thanks to the contradictory nature of his nonprofessional background and ambitious research plans, as well as his independent way of thinking, and especially his unusually strong, "brotherly" ties to some of his native speaker informants.

Today's world has changed in two key ways. For one, ethnic information that made its way into the humanities used to have no impact on Ob-Ugric peoples, except the yearslong educational and cultural development work of W. Steinitz in the 1930s, as well as the effects of socialism-era "Leningrad field research" on the intellectual class of ethnic minorities. Today, there is an immediate information feedback loop influencing Ob-Ugric peoples' consciousness and fate. For another, research today is characterized by both outsider and insider knowledge, with the latter referring to the process of

indigenous activities and self-understanding. Given that during the Soviet period, education and ethnic identity were at odds with one another, the younger generation of researchers are, with their research, partly making up for this lack of inclusion. Research – and art – are becoming part of the Ob-Ugric lifestyle, while authentic Ob-Ugric traditions are increasingly made impossible by the forces of globalization and a general sense of crisis. The philology written by ethnic minorities themselves differs in substantial ways from traditional philology, reflecting native-speaker competence, an insider perspective, and a different perception, with distinct imagery, associations, and conclusions. It currently incorporates little from earlier publications, and it uses Russian as its modeling system and accompanying language.

Meanwhile, the time has come to reverse the questions we are asking. For example, let's not just ask how Reguly helped academia understand Khanty culture but also the converse: Who was the Khanty informant who helped Reguly preserve information for his future descendants, and what kind of information was it? The existence of ethnic knowledge bases with their own internal dynamics is now apparent, and it will not be long until we can ask: "What does the wind do when it doesn't blow?" Or, in other words, what happens with ethnic information when it is latent? If we think about it, Reguly was the only person in the world around 1840 through whom the thoughts of one Khanty person took written form, and on many subjects, Reguly was a very receptive partner. Of course, as with any field researcher, it was his informants who made him a groundbreaking figure. Therefore, it is worth reviewing and summarizing what we know about his work and his ties to Khanty lands.

I am not a Reguly researcher, not from either a textual philological perspective or a field research perspective, and I lack the time to exhaustively analyze the latest information in either sphere. It would obviously pave the way to resolving numerous problems if I were to examine Reguly's journals on site or involve the archives and new publications in Russia. Despite this, Reguly's world is already familiar to me in some ways, because I frequently experience situations similar to his, working both with my Khanty and Mansi colleagues and with the source materials. And furthermore, there are several obvious new pieces of information relevant to what has been discussed so far.

The mysterious singer: "Maksim Nikilov"

After Reguly traveled throughout Mansi lands, his first group encounter with Khanty people was during the fall of 1844, and it happened in the

Synja and Lower Ob region. He began his more in-depth collection in Berëzovo, where he arrived on November 24, 1844 to spend the winter. After the official visits, the organizer invited one of the most famous singers at Reguly's request. Reguly enlisted the singer, and on November 27, he got to work. Barely a month later, Reguly had 107½ handwritten pages' worth of Khanty material in his possession, along with Mansi materials he had written down from various informants.

When József Pápay began decoding and translating the mysterious collection as the primary goal of his 1898–1899 expedition, it took great effort to figure out who the materials were from and which dialects they were in. Reguly's journal and drafts revealed that the trove of materials, which could have filled a library, came from but one singer. After that, what puzzled him the most was that this individual was not from a Khanty area at all but instead came from the Mansi-populated area along the Sygva (Ljapin) River. If one reads all the literature that resulted from trying to solve the mystery of Reguly's texts, one is forced to conclude that the informant represents a Khanty group that has disappeared: the Sygva Khanty.

We know that the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Russian sources refer to the Ljapin population not as Mansi but as "Ostyaks" (Khanty). The word "Ostyak" served of course as a kind of hypernym, encompassing a good half dozen Western Siberian peoples, as used in the earlier written records. In this particular case, the question is rather: What was the reason for using a distinct term to differentiate the population of the Ljapin area from the neighboring populations? There must have been some reason for this, because the Russian administrative division and the local terminology generally provided a quite faithful reflection of the social relations of the time. The next question: If the Ljapin population really did contain some distinct component, did this group originate before or after the general population? Researchers after Reguly did not meet any indigenous Ljapin Khanty people, and nor is there any information on them from later Mansi groups. Russian researchers have not yet solved the Ljapin Khanty problem, and an exhaustive analysis of the place names and family names of the entire Northern Mansi region is needed.[1] Analysis of migration tendencies reveals that the direction was likely from south to north and from west to east, and so it is possible that Mansi newcomers settled among Khanty populations. In the case of multiple waves of migration, the reverse could have also been true (see later).

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[1]   The researcher who currently has the greatest opportunity to do so is T. Dmitrieva of the University of Ekaterinburg, a linguist by training who has spent decades on site collecting Ob-Ugric toponymic locations.

If we apply a fact-based analysis of the Khanty source materials published before the current period (more specifically, the "Kazym Khanty information invasion"), then it turns out that, thanks to the whims of fate, the documentation of the language and folklore of this elusive Khanty group (or of just one special person?) towers above that of any other. To this very day, the traditional training of an Ob-Ugric researcher builds on a foundation of Khanty language and culture documented in Reguly's collection. For this reason, it is worth thoroughly examining who this individual might have been – this person who, with Reguly's help, managed so successfully to live on.

Pápay used the following method to determine the identity of the singer in question.[2] Reguly himself wrote in the outline of a letter that he had documented 80 handwritten pages' worth of Khanty heroic epic songs from a single person from Sygva. In his journal, he names the singer he hired on November 27, 1844, as Maksim Nikilov. Four days later, after dictating two long songs, this old man travels home. On December 1, Reguly again enlists a singer of the *peś* clan (pess ruot). In another place, after naming this clan, he mentions the Sygva village of *Khorum paul* with a note that the populations of *Mesig paul* and *Khorum paul* have migrated from the Upper Sosʹva settlement *Akhtes us*. And again, in another place, a Mansi sentence can be found that reads: *Khorum paul magam, achtes uosnel jim magma*, or "the *Khorum paul* people – people who have come from *Akhtes us*".[3] Given that his subsequent writings do not mention another Khanty singer, and yet the twelve documented heroic epic songs reflect identical style and language use, it is obvious that all of the songs originate from Maksim Nikilov.

Maksim Nikilov's background

Given that Reguly very rarely noted in his northern collections who his specific informants were, there must have been some reason that he paid special attention to detailing the elderly singer's background. As hypothesized by Pápay, this could have been his attempt to identify the place from which the songs originated.[4] Perhaps another factor was that Reguly

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[2] The most direct source for identifying Maksim Nikilov the person, as well as the circumstances of the transcription, is the foreword of József Pápay's *Osztják népköltési gyűjtemény* (Pápay 1905. I–LXXXII.). From this point on, my citations will use the traditional abbreviations of Finno-Ugric studies, in parentheses, after the year of publication.

[3] Pápay 1905. LXXXIV.

[4] Pápay 1905. LXXXIV.

had thoroughly explored Mansi lands, including that of the Upper Sosʹva River, as well as the Sygva *Khorum paul* region, and was thus describing familiar places. We cannot know to what extent the information related to the Khanty, but it must have stood out in some way if it was worth recording for posterity. Another motivating factor could have been his respect for the old man, since Reguly himself wrote that there were not more than half a dozen singers in the entire northern region who had a comparable skill level. This list of Maksim Nikilov's ancestors is likely the first Khanty family tree to be documented. It can be summarized below:

Generation	Name	Details
0	(NAGL's father)	He lived in *Akhtes us* by the Upper Sosʹva, migrated to the Sygva (Ljapin) River area, taking his son with him.
1	NAGL	As a child, he was taken by his father to the Sygva River. After settling there, he had seven sons, one of whom was named Katang.
2	KATANG (?Hotang 'Swan')	His son was Jaguschka.
3	JAGUSCHKA	He was born around 1680 and lived close to 100 years. Maksim was 7 when he died. His son was named Peter.
4	PETER	Maksim's father
5	MAKSIM	He was born around 1770 and was around 75 years old when he met Reguly.

If we assume that a generational shift happens every 30 years, the migration from the Sosʹva River must have occurred at the beginning of the 1600s. First of all, the question arises: Where exactly was the ancestral home of this family? Reguly has the precise name of the settlement in Mansi: *Achtes uos (āχtəs ūs)* 'Stone City'. No information currently exists about an Upper Sosʹva settlement of this name. Bernát Munkácsi, however, noted at the end of the nineteenth century that a place with an identical name has long been known in Komi translation: in his day, the Russians of Berëzovo used this name for the Mansi village *Janig paul* ('big village'). (Note from É.S.: This is the *Janig paul* of the Upper Sosʹva River; the Tapsuj River also has a village by this name.) In Russian sources this is written as *Искарь, Искарские юрты* (*iz* 'stone' + *kar* 'city'). He suspected that there once stood a wooden fortress in this area, and it was the cultic center of the main guardian spirit of the region, the Upper Sosʹva Elder.[5] The old Russian administrative documents mention a place called *Iskarskie jurty*

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[5] Munkácsi 1910. 117.

instead of *Janig paul*, and in addition to the Mansi of the Upper Sos′va, the Upper Loz′va were also listed here and taxed here. The place name is also corroborated by A. Kannisto's population data from the early twentieth century.[6] *Janig paul* had another name, of Komi origin: Jugra.

Even the fact that the ancestral home of the Nikolov family might have been along the Upper Sos′va River is itself thought-provoking. Because of its sheer geographical location, it has always played a special role, regardless of which ethnic groups inhabited it. In Western Siberia, high-altitude watersheds, from which major rivers flow, represent a very special type of culture. The upper streams of the rivers form zones of intercommunication, with mixed or transitional dialects. The middle part of the river flows along the territory of various dialects. And, finally, the lower reaches toward the end of the river are home to significantly different groups of people who can hardly understand each other, if the inhabitants even belong to the same ethnic group. With the opening of the winter roads, the upper zone becomes crossable to the inhabitants of the river source and the lower reaches of the river. It is in this territory that various linguistic and cultural features come into contact and converge. The source of the river is more than just where the river begins; it is also the source of cosmic energies, of ethnic life force, of spirituality, and of creativity – a constant cultural renewal. In line with the law of duality, the territorial centers along the estuary and main channel of the river have analogous but opposite energies of "absorb, normalize, divide."

It is this exact purpose that was served by the watershed territory alongside the Konda, Pelym, Loz′va, Northern Sos′va, and Little Sos′va – the eastern, western, and northern frontiers of the Mansi. The northern, upper part of the Sos′va River began to expand towards the northeast centuries ago, and had a significant effect on Khanty history. One example is the (life) journey of the Kazym goddess. Legend has it that she was born along the Upper Sos′va River, and then moved to the Ob estuary region to marry her husband. From there, moving upwards along the Ob River and the tributary on the opposite bank, the Kazym, she settled down by the upper stream of the river in a place that had the exact same type of energy and watershed as her birthplace on the opposite side. Two similar but smaller watersheds are found further north, in the region near the source of the Sygva River and, on the other side of the Ob River, the region by the source of the Kunovat River. Therefore, if we come across a trend that originates from the Upper Sos′va River, spreads along the area by the Sygva River and/or the Lower Ob River, and finally comes to an end along the eastern banks of the Ob River, we can consider it a natural phenomenon.

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[6]   Kannisto & Nevalainen 1969. 62.

Watersheds have a special cultural significance due to the high-ranking gods and guardian spirits that inhabit them. In the same way, these areas play a key role in the flow of information, thanks to their populations that specialize in receiving, processing, and distributing information to and from multiple sources. These populations appear concerned with the production of ethnically relevant information from different sources and in various forms. This role remains constant despite migration, shifts in ethnic groups, and changes in media and techniques for storing information. It is not hard to be convinced; it is enough to simply calculate the percentage of sacred texts recorded in Mansi lands that originate from the area of *Janig paul*. Understanding Ob-Ugric energy and information mechanisms, it would not be surprising to find that before disappearing, a stream of information changes its medium, territory, and function – not only preserving itself longer than anything else but also reactivating upon its return.

Further information about the "Nikilov" family

The "Nikilov" family name can be verified in historical sources. The most comprehensive documentation of the geographic distribution of family names from the second half of the eighteenth century to today was published in Z. P. Sokolova's *Social Organization of the Khanty and Mansi in the 18th to 19th Centuries*. This work does not contain any information about the occurrence of the name along the Upper Sos′va River, which supports the claim that if there truly had been a migration to a new location it must have already happened by the second half of the eighteenth century and that any family members who stayed behind did not retain the Nikilov family name (see *Figure 1*).

In the exact place Reguly indicated, the *Khorympaul′skie jurty* settlement on the Ljapin River, we can find a similar-sounding name. It is written Nigylev *(Нигылев)*. In addition, Nigylevs appear in three other places: the Middle Sos′va *Kuginskie jurty* settlement *(χɔχaŋ pāwəl),* the *Maz′janskie jurty* settlement *(mŏśaŋ kǫrt)* by the Lower Kazym River in Khanty land, and the *Mengitnël′skie jurty* settlement *(mēŋkət ńol)* along the Great Ob River. Of the latter, Kannisto writes at the beginning of the twentieth century: "along the Ob River, in the Kunovat region, lived Voguls [Mansi] who had migrated from around the Ljapin River (Kolimovs and Lopasovs)".[7] To my knowledge, their descendants, if any remain at all, could have relocated to

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[7] Kannisto & Nevalainen 1969. 86.

and settled into the southernmost community of *Kazym-mys (kasəm-ńŏl)* in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug.

 Information about the Nigylevs is summarized in *Table 1*.[8]
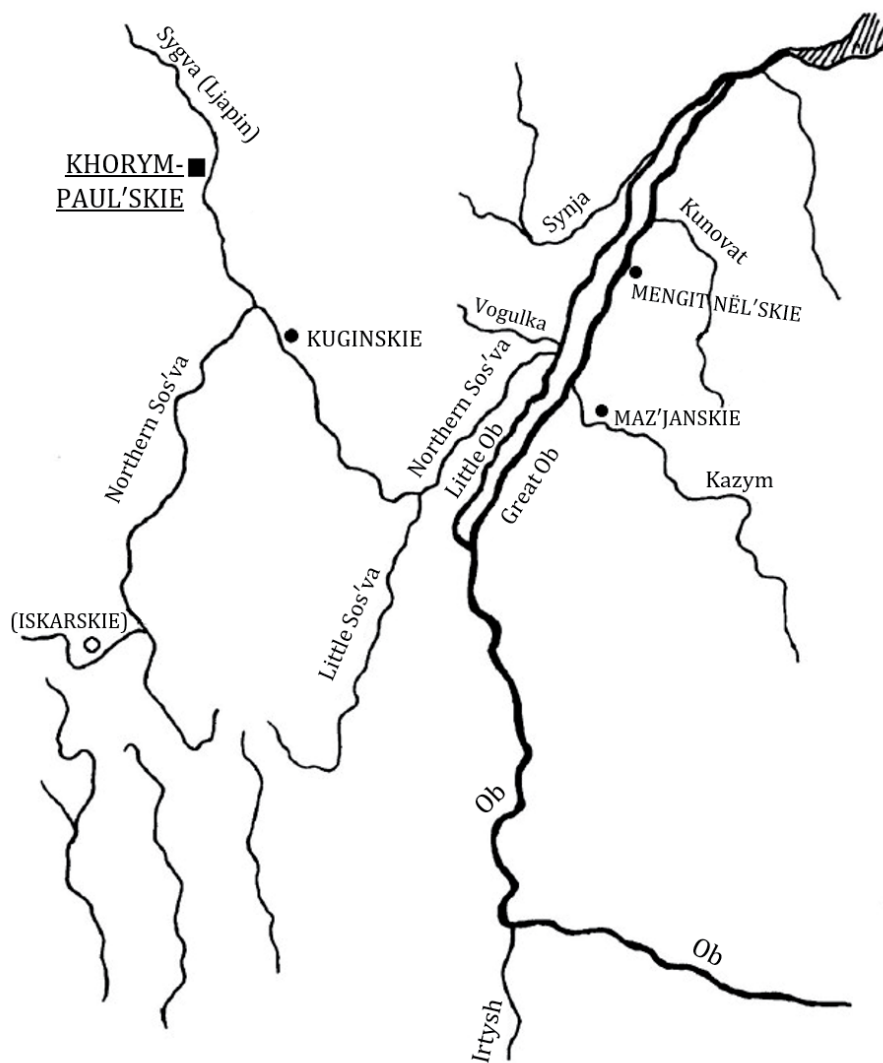

Figure 1.[9]
The distribution of the Nigylev family name in the eighteenth century

8 Sokolova 1983. 168, 170, 177, 194.
9 Figures 1 and 2, based on Éva Schmidt's original map, were recreated in English by Gergely Antal M.

Table 1.
Details known about the Nigylev family

Settlement	Number of				Marriages			Moiety
	farms	residents	married couples	widow(er)s	18th century	19th century		
						1st half	2nd half	
Khorympaulʹskie	3	41	8	1	21	10	3	*moś*
Kuginskie	1	3	1	3	7	-	-	*por*
Mazʹjanskie	1	9	1	3	7	-	-	*por*
Mengitnël′skie	1	5	-	1	-	-	-	

We cannot know whether the Nigylevs found throughout various locations were related to one another, but the infrequent occurrence and unusual spelling of this family name appears to support this assumption. We cannot draw any profound conclusions from Sokolova's data, which was collected for a different purpose. All that can be proven is that the Nigylevs primarily lived in Khorympaul′skie, where the frequency of marriage by Nigylev men rapidly decreased, and the lonely families of those who moved elsewhere quickly became unidentifiable. The direction of their migration follows that of the typical patterns of the time. If, by the second half of the nineteenth century only three marriages were documented in their original village within 50 years, it is not difficult to conclude that this clan was already disappearing even then.

Could there still be living descendants of Maksim Nikilov? Despite the meager data, the possibility cannot be ruled out, as there were known to be three married couples during the second half of the nineteenth century. According to Kannisto's data, there were two families in Khorympaul′skie in the early nineteenth century:

Mikil′op Ivan Petrovič + 7 family members
Mikal′ep Jelesij Petrovič + 4 family members

Around this time, the village was entirely Mansi. The name, with its suspiciously Ob-Ugric origins, was reinterpreted quite a bit based on Russian – perhaps, we might think, as a result of ethnic change? The transformation of the version Reguly had written can be easily traced from Nikilov to Mikiljop. (As in Siberian Russian, names can undergo the n–m shift. Compare the name of Pápay's "Kazym" singer, which Reguly would have spelled Nikiškin, with Mikiškin being its present-day form.) The identical patronym is also interesting. Regardless, any number of descendants of the great singer could be living under other family names. I inquired among

the Mazjam Khanty people of the Lower Kazym River, who, although they could not recall such a name, nor any migrations, do differ anthropologically from their surroundings. For several years now, I have wanted to go and visit the *Khorum paul* area, because none of the people I have happened to run into from there have recognized the Mikilov name.

A new change in perspective?

In the new era, it is natural that ethnic minorities themselves interpret and handle information from completely different perspectives than in traditional research. When in 1994 I held a lecture on this topic during a commemoration of Reguly in Khanty-Mansijsk, the renowned Mansi academic Jevdokija Ivanovna Rombandeeva, who comes from the exact area under discussion, raised two questions: (1) What is the evidence that Reguly's singer was Khanty? Could it not have been that he was Mansi and learned Khanty from somewhere else? (2) Why must we search for *Akhtes us* along the Upper Sos′va River, when the relatively close Sygva River would be a much simpler explanation for the family's origins? I, too, have wondered: Why do we take the previous century's reconstruction for granted?

W. Steinitz, who devoted a detailed study to Reguly's unique notational style, took it for granted that the Sygva Khanty had already moved to the area along the Lower Ob River centuries before and that the Khanty who had remained in place had assimilated into the Mansi population.[10] There is no doubt that Maksim Nikilov was bilingual, since the Mansi story "The Tale of the Merchant," documented on December 8 and 21 in 1844, can also be traced back to him.[11] Reguly must have felt comfortable in this dialect, because it was on the basis of this story that he began explaining the Mansi language to Hunfalvy. It seems likely that Reguly and Maksim Nikilov, during their months spent together, relied heavily on the Northern Mansi dialect. Two pieces of information suggest that the singer belonged to a "transitional" ethnicity between Khanty and Mansi, which is a documented phenomenon that exists to this day. One is that even though Reguly writes about this singer in a Khanty context, he does not explicitly describe his ethnicity as such. Typical of this attitude, for example, is this description, in the draft of his letter praising Khanty heroic epics: "*Von den Greisen, die noch Gesänge kennen, giebt es auf der Sossva nur einen, auf der Ssigva*

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[10] Steinitz 1976. 64.
[11] Munkácsi 1896. 324–344.

zwei und auf dem Ob hier auch zwei. Diese Leute sind zwischen 70 und 100, und Leben oder wenigstens die Kraft ihres Gedächtnisses kann binnen eines Jahres villeicht geendigt sein. Diese 80 Bogen habe ich alle aus dem Munde eines einzigen Mannes geschrieben, er ist von der Ssigva."[12] Here, he uses Sos′va, Sygva, and Ob to describe the ethnicities of different populations. Furthermore, the dialect József Pápay considers to be the closest to that of Maksim Nikilov happens to be that of a similarly mixed group, the population of the Upper Vogulka, whose the informants themselves could not decide whether they were Mansi or Khanty.

If ethnic identity cannot be clearly established, linguistic facts take on increased importance, especially historical anthroponymy and toponymy. We would be closer to the solution if we could be more certain about the etymology of the family name Nigylev and personal name Nagl. An obvious root word is not available in either Khanty or Mansi. In the latter, for example, Rombandeeva postulates as an alternative the Mansi *ниг* 'лыко' – съедобный нежный слой дерева ('bast', the soft, edible layer of a tree) and the Komi *нигыль* 'скользкий' ('slick, slippery').[13] As for the clan name interpreted by Pápay as *pēś rūt*, Reguly's spelling *pess ruot* is reminiscent of the Mansi *pēs* 'old' (the *ś* phoneme is written by Reguly as *sch*). The name of the singer's village can also be reinterpreted in an interesting way (see below). To this very day, the primary evidence of Maksim Nikilov's Khanty identity is the language that he spoke, or most accurately, one of its elements. A unique feature of the Berëzovo-Šuryškary peripheral dialect is that the northern dialects use *s* in place of the phoneme *š*, which corresponds to the sound change characteristic of the Sos′va and Sygva Mansi dialects. Vocalism and all other parameters of the source materials rule out the possibility the phenomenon could be attributed to a lack of Khanty language proficiency. Russian historical records prove that by the eighteenth century the Nigylevs were based in the Sygva village of *Khorum paul*. The "essing" dialect of Berëzovo could hardly have been learned as a second language, because no one has found such a language since. The *š > s* change, on the other hand, has an analog elsewhere: the Obdorsk dialect of Khanty. Here the dialect of the local Lower Ob Khanty population, as well as the dialect that resulted from the mixing of Sos′va–Sygva Khanty and Mansi newcomers, features the exact same sound.

When it comes to place name etymologies, the most interesting example is that of *Khorum paul*. The village is known by the variations *χɔrəŋ-*

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[12] Munkácsi 1892–1902. XX–XXI.
[13] Rombandeeva 1993. 49.

pāwəl and *χɔrəm-pāwəl*, and of these two, the first appears more likely to be the original (the alternation of the morpheme *-əŋ* and the suffix *-əm* is widely documented among both place names and common nouns.) It can be interpreted in numerous ways. Munkácsi first translated it as "dried-fish-offal-village."[14] In the dictionary adapted and published by Béla Kálmán, the word is linked to a different root: "*χårėŋ (χɔrəŋ)* Khanty, ~ *lātiŋ* Khanty word, language, ~ *māχum* Khantys, ~ *paul, χårėm paul (χɔrəŋ-pāwəl): lui* and *ali χ–p.* 2 Mansi village" (note from É.S.: Lower and Upper *Khorum paul*) (WW 108). There is also an eponymous lake next to the village. According to this source, the famous singer's village is "Khanty-village." Reguly noted in the original language, citing a Mansi flood myth as his explanation, that "during the time of the flood" the populations of the Šekur′ja, Khangla, and Manja villages lived along the Upper Sygva, but there were no villages below, just Munkes and Lopmus.[15] Consequently, the villages of *Khorum paul* and *Mesig paul* must indeed have been settled later, as has been noted elsewhere with respect to their origins in *Akhtes us*. There is no reason to doubt this relative chronology. The problem is that we know too little about the peoples from the Upper Sos′va region, from the presumedly nearby *Akhtes us*, and from the surrounding area. Given that more data indicates that *Khorum paul* was founded by later migrants, we can presume that these people named a village on the Sygva River "stone city," based on the name of their former home. Reguly must have hardly found the fact of this local migration noteworthy, and obviously he himself did not come up with the idea of Upper Sos′va origins. As for whether they could have called the newcomer Nigylevs by the Mansi term *pēs rūt* 'old clan', this can be addressed by the fact that they could have brought this name from their previous home. If it was in fact a clan name of more recent origin, then it would be an appropriate designation for the Sygva Khanty who had lived there previously.

Collaboration between Reguly and Maksim Nikilov

The work carried out over the course of a month and a half can be described as protecting the interests of both parties. Maksim Nikilov knew that he was growing old, only half a dozen or so singers like him remained, and his clan stood before a decisive turning point of language change and population

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14 Munkácsi 1896. 439.
15 Hunfalvy 1864. 76–77, 155–156.

decline. One additional fateful element contributed: Reguly "accidentally" found the very last generation for whom the heroic age of wooden fortresses, armor, and swords was still a living psychological reality. Those who came after experienced it as an unparalleled, distinct era, and their interest and devotion has waned. During his hurried travels, Reguly could not have personally confirmed the repertoires of the various people he met in different places. The "last-minute" feeling is something he could have only gotten from his informants, who, as we know from our own experience of field research, prefer to share with foreign researchers not archaic genres but their own repertoires, while in other situations, among themselves, competing with one another, the songs flow out of them. But the active period of the heroic epic had truly come to an end. It was probably the singer himself who drew the researcher's attention to the historic importance of sacred heroic epic poetry and its preservation. After all, in his previous Mansi collections, this genre did not receive the same level of attention, not in the number of pieces collected, nor in the importance attributed to them. It was in Reguly's interest to find *dignified* ancestors for the downtrodden Hungarians, and he was also influenced by the Kalevala epic poetry of the Finns. He was so surprised and impressed by the heroic age of this small northern people's spirituality that he was ready to write down ancient songs *that were virtually incomprehensible to him*. It is hard to imagine such an intense cooperation merely for a wage, without some shared interest.

Until the Reguly materials compiled by Enikő Szíj are published and annotated in full (including the journal from his expedition), the chronological order of his transcriptions cannot be fully established. I use Zsirai's version,[16] although it does not always match other versions. For simplicity's sake, I have transcribed the titles phonematically, with original translations (Table 2).

Table 2.
Khanty songs dictated to Reguly in Berëzovo

Date	Number	Title	Lines
1844		**Heroic epic songs**	
November 28 29	1	*pŭləŋ-awət eri* "Song of Obdorsk"	1378
29 30 December 1	2	*lew-kŭtəp ar* "A Middle Sos′va Song"	2437

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[16] Reguly, Pápay & Zsirai 1944. VI.

6 7 8	3	*samas wɔš ar* "Song of Čemaš Fortress (City)"	1590
8 9	4	*wurt ar* "Song of the Prince" (World Surveyor Man)	1346
10 11 12	5	*jēli-ūs ēriɣ* "Song of the Fortress (City) of Ljulykary"	2795
13	6 7	*natəŋ ar* "A Nadym Song" *luŋχ-awət ńŏl ar* "Song of the Idol-Fortress-Peak" (?Angal′skij Mys)	1463 721
14	8	*muŋkes χɔ̄nt tɔ̄rəm ēriɣ* "Song of the Munkes War God"	1330
20	9	*as puɣəl ar* "Song of the Ob Village" (Aspugol′skie)	1071
22	10	*pŏləm turəm ar* "Song of the Pelym God"	617
Unknown	11	*urt enməm ar* "Song of the Prince Coming of Age" (World Surveyor Man)	969
Unknown	12	*jeməŋ as-mūwi ar* "Song of the Holy Ob Riverbend"	540
		Bear Songs	
Unknown	13	*turma kălməm kăli χu* "The Wonderous Man Who Appeared in the Sky"	686
Unknown	14	*śŏpər naj aŋkem ar* "Song of My Mother Lady Šoper"	185
		Total number of lines	17,102

The seasoned publisher of the Reguly collection, Miklós Zsirai, compared the number of lines in the collection (17,102) to that of the ancient Kalevala (12,078), and it turned out that in only one month's work Reguly transcribed more material than the first version of the famous epic.[17] Among researchers, no one else demonstrated this level of intensity, nor did any of the other singer informants dictate more words. Reguly's direct "descendent," Pál Hunfalvy, immediately guessed that this achievement would never be matched.[18] Steinitz, who himself worked among the Khanty in the 1930s, established from his historical vantage point the importance of Reguly and his collected materials: "this is to this day – and probably for all time – the richest collection of Khanty heroic epic songs ever."[19]

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[17] Reguly, Pápay & Zsirai 1944. VIII.
[18] Hunfalvy 1864. 67.
[19] Steinitz 1976. 62.

In the current era, all we can add is that it is impossible to beat this achievement using traditional means. The only factor that made it easier for Reguly was the fact that in those days, researchers did not follow any preconceptions or rules of transcription; he wrote the words as he heard them, not bothering to even worry about line breaks. For researchers today, used to using a tape recorder, it is amazing that he was able to follow along with the informant's slow dictation or singing for such an extended period of time, writing by hand, without using any special shorthand techniques. After all, today's researchers, whether foreign or native speakers, can prepare by studying the formulaic structures, grammatical rules, and stylistic phrases of heroic epics so that upon hearing the first few words, they can anticipate the following line. József Pápay was probably the first to reach this point. To this day, it is a mystery how Reguly, who previously had no serious exposure to the Khanty language, was able to successfully transcribe what he heard. Another amazing mystery is how the singer managed to patiently perform the song, despite a slowed-down delivery that was likely interrupted with repetitions, when he could not have had the faintest understanding of philology. And if we consider the fact that transcribing the short half-line motifs of 2 1 / 2 1 or hardly longer in meter is less labor-intensive than, for example, a bear ceremony song of 3 3 / 3 3 meter, packed with filler words, it is an almost unbelievable achievement to have transcribed two heroic epic songs on the single day of December 13, 1844.

Despite the previously mentioned alarm bells of the past, Khanty heroic epic songs have not yet disappeared, although their performers have dramatically decreased in number and geographic distribution. There are older singers whose repertoires only differ from that of the esteemed Maksim Nikilov in their higher proportion of bear ceremony epic songs. There are several Khanty-born researchers who write epic songs from scratch – obviously not following Steinitz's phonemic transcription. Reguly's achievement could yet be repeated, but the greatest obstacle to doing so is the destructive effect that our technological society has on the cooperative partnership between the transcriber and informant. A performer accustomed to today's recording techniques could hardly adapt to the tempo of someone writing by hand, especially not with the knowledge that the transcriber does not even understand the material. The transcriber who relies on a tape recorder notes far smaller units than necessary, and there are no established mechanisms for immediately distinguishing essential information from that which can be omitted. And what is even harder to replicate is the relationship between the two people. A Khanty researcher might be able to repeat the achievement itself (for example, the speed or

volume of transcription), but this would exclude the criterion that Reguly was not a native speaker.

Multiple generations of linguists have analyzed Reguly's manuscripts, with the foundational work completed by József Pápay. From analyzing others' work one can quickly realize that a person cannot analyze the handwritten transcript of an amateur, non-native researcher any better today – much less in a library – than one might do so given a certain amount of time in the Salekhard region with an old reindeer herder. From the errors of famous predecessors: neither native speaker status nor high-quality recordings can save a person from mistakes like incorrectly identified phonemes, misunderstood words, and incorrect word boundaries; the rate of these errors will just decrease. The greatest help is prior familiarity with the plot and the formulas, as well as active practice in singing and songwriting.

The mythologem, therefore, that says that later descendants cannot even rival the ancestors of the heroic age, applies to every aspect of life, including the bearers and collectors of folklore. In this day and age, there are few things we can replicate, but it is not too late for this one. If we ever wanted to know how Reguly's manuscript came to be, now is the final window in which there still remain several traditionally raised epic singers who have little knowledge of Russian. If we were to bring together for even just several hours such a singer and a Hungarian whose Khanty language skills roughly approximate those of Reguly, what quality of work do you suppose would be put to paper?

Maksim Nikilov provided most of his dictations before the end of 1844, and these of course comprised only a portion of his rich repertoire. Reguly himself at the end of February 1845 was forced to journey back to Petersburg, as doubts began to emerge in academic circles about his preparedness and "one-track" technical approach to gathering source materials. We can only imagine how much we might know today if Nikilov had continued singing his repertoire, or if Reguly, in an attempt to research the Khanty language more deeply, had had the opportunity to gather materials from other sources.

The geographic distribution of places featured in Maksim Nikilov's heroic epic songs

In order to form some idea of the singer's cultural and spatial orientation, we can analyze which specific areas and places he considered worthy of singing about, or even necessary to sing about, for the sake of preserving

this historical information for the future. The following factors must have played a role: (1) the culture of his own local group, (2) the connections of his group to specific areas, (3) the cultural significance of certain places and guardian spirits, (4) the heroic epic performance traditions of a given region, and (5) subjective factors within the relationship between the singer and researcher, such as whether the latter has prior knowledge about or interest in a specific place, personality, or plot element.

At first glance, it is striking out how unrelated the repertoire is to the zone of the upper section of the tributaries. The Upper Sos′va region, the hypothesized ancestral home of the Nigylevs, does not appear at all as a primary theme, although part of the singer's repertoire, including a few dictated songs, may have been passed down from his Upper Sos′va ancestors. Maksim Nikilov's closer home, the Sygva region, is represented in only one song: the song about the nearby Munkes village's war god. This epic about the guardian spirit must have been popular, because the Middle Sos′va version of his heroic exploits were documented by Bernát Munkácsi on his 1888–89 expedition.[20] According to Reguly's journal, Maksim was in no rush to perform the song: it was the eighth he had dictated. There may be a few geographical aspects to the "Song of the Prince" (i.e., "Song of the World Surveyor Man"), given that the son, born from a Russian woman (identifiable as the heroine of the song?), is the guardian spirit of the *Khorum paul* area.[21] All of this suggests that when dictating to strangers, the singer did not begin with the cultic epic of the tributaries.

The majority of stories (seven of twelve) relate to the Ob River, the axis around which the Ob-Ugric worldview revolves. In their summer migrations and their emigrations, it is these fishing spots that the peoples living along the tributaries move towards. The distribution of storylines by settlement shows the highest density along the Lower Ob and estuary region. After the Ob River, only the Irtysh estuary region has more songs relating to a single place.

In this worldview, the estuary region of the Ob River signifies the boundary zone of the Lower World (the world of destructive forces and the dead). In accordance with the dialectical solutions of traditional Eastern societies, this area holds great significance and has a major cultic following. Its prominent sacred sites – such as the *Angal′skij mys*, the Sacred Ob Riverbend, high-ranking guardian spirits, like *Avet iki* (the Headland Elder) – are well known among all the northern groups of the Ob-Ugric peoples. It was no coincidence that this was where one of the most powerful groups

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[20] Munkácsi 1910. 181–203.
[21] Rombandeeva 1993. 77.

emerged from the mixing of Sos′va and Sygva Mansi with Khanty migrants from practically every northern tributary (Kazym, Synja, etc.). This group is called the "Obdorsk," or by its newer name, the Khanty of the Ural region. The Lower Ob is famous far and wide for its excellent singers, the richness of its heroic poetry, upon which the neighboring Nenets has a conserving effect even to this day. For example, the Nadym River region has a noticeably high number of documented heroic epic songs relative to its Khanty population. The small Nadym Khanty population, originally from the Obdorsk area, has today been replaced by Nenets, but its history is fleshed out in full detail, thanks to the tradition of heroic epic songwriting. Reguly himself traveled around Obdorsk and the surrounding area, and the places mentioned in the texts he transcribed were likely known to him personally and secondhand. Therefore, it is no surprise that songs featuring important Obdorsk and Nadym cultic centers ended up in his collection. As a point of interest, it is worth noting that the Ob village (*As-pugol*) song originally from the Labytnangi region, featuring a "deceitful brother-in-law" storyline, is a variant of the "Song of the Prince," the southernmost epic from Reguly's collection, and analogies were later found among most Ob-Ugric groups.[22] (see *Figure 2*)

Unlike the Ob estuary region, the Irtysh estuary region, which is referred to in Northern Khanty and Mansi folklore as the "Upper Ob" or "Main Ob," is associated with the Upper World, with the sources of life and light. Here, between Belogor′e and Troica, we find the cultic center of one of the key figures of the Ob-Ugric pantheon, the Golden Prince (World Surveyor Man). He is the primary cultural hero-god, for whom nothing is impossible. In various transformations, he turns any situation to his (or his followers') advantage, defending the Ob-Ugric "world" and identity to the very end. In traditional culture, he is the last thought of the Ugric person, in the sense that as long as one can think of him, one is Ugric, and as such can be saved. In accordance with his universal nature, his character is the most active subject of the northern peoples' folklore. He can appear in nearly any genre, and in the recent period of decline, he can fit into the plotline of any epic. In contrast to the pantheon of the Ob estuary, the teaching and folklore traditions of his cultic center were never preserved – none of the researchers worked near Troickoe – and it is only through N. I. Terëškin's collection that we can infer its incredibly richness. In any given spot across the northern territory, heroic epics were sung at length about him (and often songs in which he played a secondary role). The faithful made pilgrimages from far and wide to his holy place, and having collected cultic donations,

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[22] Demény 1977. 36.

they crossed vast terrain. Reguly did not travel in this area, but the Golden Prince plays such a "starring role" that even someone just beginning to collect Ob-Ugric folklore will immediately hear of him.
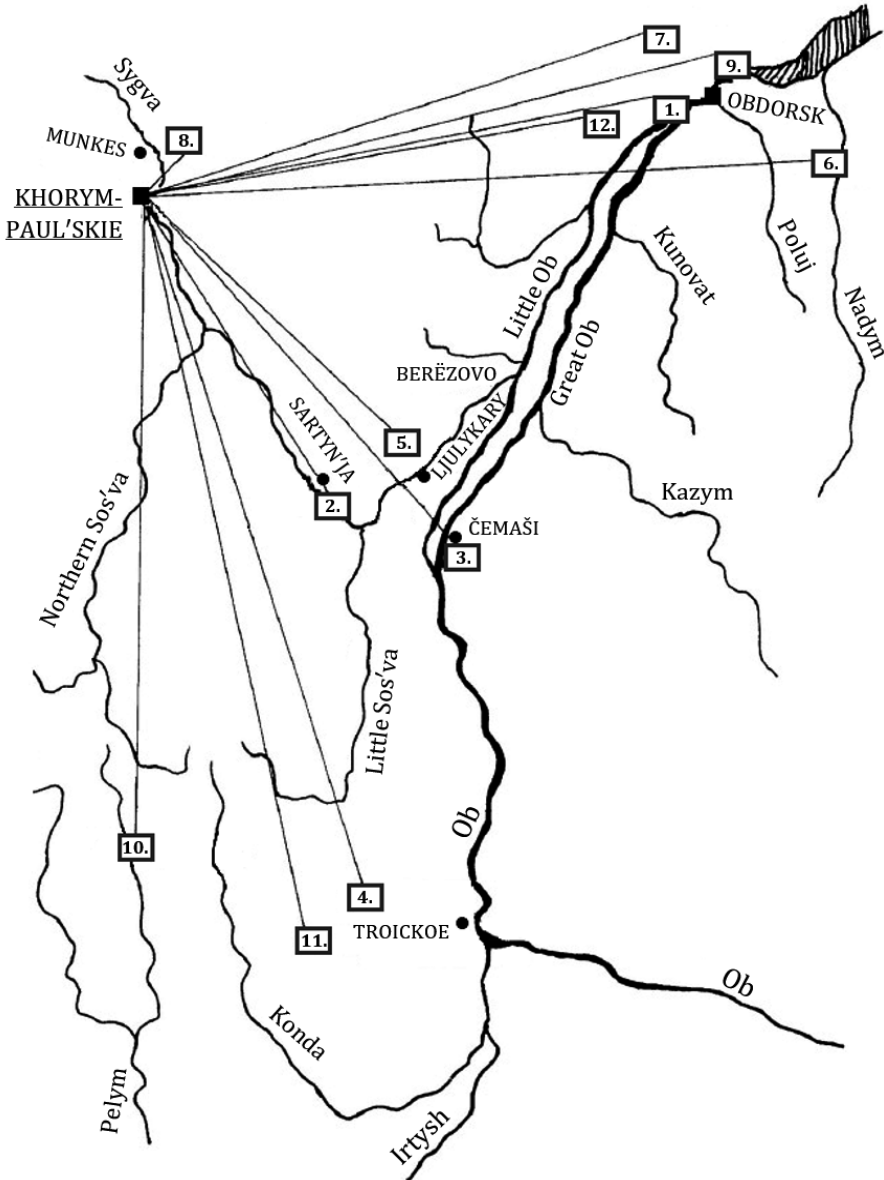

Figure 2.[23]
The geographical distribution of places featured in Maksim Nikilov's heroic epic songs

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[23] The numbers shown here refer to the songs as listed in *Table 2*.

The middle reaches of the Northern Ob River, the northern neighborhood of the erstwhile Koda principality, serves as the location of one of the most mysterious and indeed archaic songs: the "Song of Čemaš." The folklore of this transitional zone between the Ob Mansi and Šerkal Khanty has not yet been collected (and likely never will be); no researcher has worked here, with the exception of A. Ahlqvist's brief transcription from Semën Morokhov in 1877. Today it is difficult to determine even who was the original guardian spirit of the "city," but its significance is demonstrated by the fact that it was in this place that the Russians established Čemaš as a village with a church. This epic is likely of southern origins. It is worth noting that the epic of the central Ob gods (the goddess Kalteś and the Vežakary Elder) is not found in Reguly's collection, nor in that of other collectors, but that of the guardian spirit bordering the other side of the Lower Sosʹva River is.

From the tributary region, two songs stand out with their high-ranking heroes. In both cases, the hero is among the first generation of sons of the main God, and he rules over an enormous area (and its inferior spirits), connecting many Khanty and Mansi groups. One of the songs tells the story of the feats of the oldest son of the Pelym god, Torum. His cultic center was originally along the middle section of the Pelym River, and later it moved to the upper section of the river. His personality was revered by all the northern groups, and his primary cult included the upper reaches of the surrounding rivers, including the Upper Sosʹva presumed to be Nikilov's ancestral home. It can be surmised that the heroic epic song about him was passed down to the singer, because the cult of this hero is less significant along the Sygva.[24] There are myths, heroic epic songs, and stories about the Pelym god, and he also plays an important role in the bear cult. Reguly himself did not only visit the Pelym River but also offered the sacrifice of a foal in the holy place of the deity.

The second song is related to the name of the Middle Sosʹva Elder, next to the village of Sartynʹja. He is the master over the massive region from the Urals to the Ob and the lesser spirits native to the area.[25] Through migration and with the arrival of Mansi newcomers, his cult and "descendent spirits" shifted to the western banks of the Ob River and among the Khanty of the Kunovat River and Kazym estuary, and he is also highly revered in the lands of the Šerkal Khanty as well. There is a truly rich heroic epic about him, and his figure is represented during bear ceremonies even by the Khanty. Even though Reguly did not visit his holy place directly, it is nevertheless difficult

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[24] Rombandeeva 1993. 56, 77.
[25] Rombandeeva 1993. 52–54.

to imagine any trip along the Sos′va in which a visitor would not come across memories of his exploits. The military campaign in the heroic epic song documented by Reguly matches up with the northwestern expansionist ambitions of the Middle Sos′va peoples.

We can thank Reguly for another interesting epic from the middle zone: the story of the guardian spirit of Ljulykary (Mansi *jali-ūs*, Khanty *jăli-wɔš*), a settlement not far from the bend of the Lower Sos′va River. This is the longest and most complex heroic epic song that remains.

From the primary distribution of Maksim Nikilov's heroic epic songs, it is clear that he was knowledgeable about the whole northern Ob region. If we also use secondary spatial aspects as parameters (namely, where the heroes went to and from on military campaigns and to get married, and where their relatives, helpers, and adversaries came from), then the connections would weave across the whole region of the tributaries of the left bank. Interestingly, it is the Synja Khanty living near the Sygva who are the least represented. The spiritual dimensions of the heroic epic, inside and out, have always been this far reaching. In Pallas (1771–76), the first known Khanty storyline, the hero from the Obdorsk region reaches the Sos′va "in one day."[26] As far as the singers are concerned, now on the threshold of the twenty-first century, my experience shows that it is possible to gather Nenets stories from the last of the truly traditional generation, from the height of Berëzovo, without further ado. These Nenets stories, which take place in the tundra of the Ob estuary, can be recorded as stories in song form or in narrative prose. Their distribution as heroic epics or legends is limited by the fact that their distant heroes cannot be located as guardian spirits. I met an old master performer from the Nazym, or more precisely Upper Kazym, region who told Obdorsk storylines as heroic legends, and I met a singer from Vanzevat (a village along the Great Ob, north of the Kazym tributary) who knew Sos′va heroic legends and spoke of the Russian Orthodox church by the Upper Pelym as if he had been there himself. The true great masters of the sacred epic are connected to a special plane of space and time, where their plotlines are almost "ready to go." (Pëtr Ivanovič Sengepov, currently the greatest Khanty performer, says, "I store the stories 'ready in the distance'"; three or four hours of singing without pause is not particularly difficult for him.) To be part of even a fraction of this high-energy, large-scale realm (the source of "poetic exaggeration") is a special privilege for an outsider.

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[26] Quoted: Munkácsi 1892–1902. IV.

Even to this day, a sufficiently sensitive person can experience the special, elevated mood of the world of the Nikilov and Reguly epic.

Conclusion

When cultures without writing needs to preserve information for an extended period of time, they have several means of doing so: (1) the subject of the information (event, person, place) is elevated from the normal, everyday sphere to the supernatural, (2) the information is linked to a regularly recurring action (such as a custom or ritual), (3) it is expressed through formal artistic practice, which not only facilitates replication but also brings it to the conscious and subconscious planes. In this way, cultic singing was the highest, most effective, and most accurate (most detailed) form of preserving important information. Among the Ob-Ugric peoples, separate sacred institutions served to reflect and carry on the spiritual world through works of art – for example, the bear ceremony and community sacrificial feasts honoring similar spirits, events during which heroic epic songs were originally performed.

    In cultures in which time is recursive, important information about the past is conveyed by religious figures (shamans and cultic leaders) and/or specialized artistic performers (singers and storytellers). In the case of figures with leadership skills, their worldly, religious, and performative functions often overlapped. All who were able tried to learn their repertoires, and they were called to faraway lands for community holidays. They learned their basic repertoire from people close to them, adopting songs from relatives and local performers, and they expanded it during seasonal migrations (such as during summer fishing trips on the Ob River), "civilization" trips to the city (paying taxes, shopping, visiting church), and especially during the cultic festivals and holidays that mobilized many performers. The performers were of course better informed than the common people, but the community must have known their repertoires quite well. For this reason, we can consider the materials Reguly transcribed to be the most specific model – if not a complete one – of the information structure of a local group's epic in the early nineteenth century. In this regard, we can establish that the earlier Ob-Ugric groups' language and culture – despite their less developed modes of transportation – were much more homogenous than today, and this was helped in part by the great epic. More recently, as the genres have fallen into decline, a parallel cultural drift has occurred, with groups sharing fewer foundations of information.

When the famous singer began dictating, he certainly did not begin by sharing exclusive inside information with Reguly, who knew neither him nor the Khanty language well. Nor did he highlight details about his own group, although Reguly would have been familiar with the Sygva locations. To a person who was distant – though in other ways close – the singer must have transmitted the same repertoire that he would have performed for distant listeners, and so he brought to life the most varied locations. For today's Ob-Ugric spiritual leaders, this very specific material represents the epic knowledge base that was a cultural requirement and originally a condition of Khanty and Mansi identity, from Berëzovo to Obdorsk along the western banks of the Ob River. Since space and time are inseparable, when Maksim Nikilov shared the spiritual legacy of his ancestors with a man who came from 4000 kilometers away and transferred it to a completely different medium, he also laid the foundation for his words to return to his descendants centuries later.

With a few expert adjustments to modernize the texts, the Reguly materials can be easily understood by today's speakers of the Berëzovo (Tegi) and Šuryškary dialects. Thematically, the heroic epic songs from Reguly and "supplementary collections" from Pápay hold great significance for the Khanty of the Ob estuary who live in the Lower Ob and Nenets regions, but they require interdialectal and Russian translations that take into account the Hungarian translation and annotations. Ethnic groups can be classified into categories based on their chances for cultural and linguistic survival. Among groups within the first category (such as the Kazym Khanty), the language and, in part, the culture are carried on by the youth, who successfully adapt their culture for the new era. In the second category, youth are still connected to ethnic culture, but if, within several years, this generation is unable to adapt the culture (including its written forms) into their own new version, the group's chances for survival will be lost forever. In the third category are groups that are assimilating and whose youth no longer speak the language. All of the groups mentioned above belong to the second category; their status is endangered, and they cannot afford to miss any opportunities for survival. Those who still have some understanding of the ancient ways of thinking know that nothing happens by accident. Over the past century, the majority of Ob-Ugric groups have disappeared, and countless native words have been forgotten. In contrast, Maksim Nikilov's words are just now returning to the youngest generation, offering an opportunity for them to learn about the pure spirituality and history of their people and to recognize genuine Khanty values in themselves. Even if these groups are disadvantaged in many ways, the written heritage of their

ancient spiritual leaders is an advantage that many other groups have not been so richly endowed with.

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(English translation by Melinda Széll)

József Pápay's Khanty Collection and Its Ethnographic Considerations

Notes on the publication of *Pápay József osztják hagyatéka (próbafüzet)*, published by Edit Vértes. Volume I of the series *Bibliotheca Pápayensis*. Debrecen, 1988. p. 85.

(1990)

Edit Vértes, the most prolific publisher of Khanty language source materials, offers readers a surprise with her publication of an unusual "workbook," a facsimile edition of one of József Pápay's manuscripts. There had been multiple hints that the Khanty source materials that Pápay had collected in 1898–99 were in an edited and publishable state by the time he died in 1931. Until now, however, the only people who knew exactly what this meant were the publishers of the Reguly and Pápay collections: Miklós Zsirai, Dávid Fokos-Fuchs, and István Erdélyi.

The short, four-language introduction in Hungarian, German, English, and Russian outlines the well-known fate that befalls collections of Khanty materials: After the premature death of their collectors, it would often take over a century for these works to reach a publishable state. Preparing an unanalyzed collection for publication is, in fact, extremely time- and labor-intensive. Pápay, in contrast, left his work well prepared and yet only four of the heroic epic songs from his collection have been published.[1] Edit Vértes points out that the analyzed portion of the Pápay collection – folk poetry, mythology, and ethnography in four volumes of 400 to 500 pages – is relatively easy (note from É.S.: and cheap) to publish with the help of photocopying technology, before Pápay's penciled notes disappear forever. This, of course, is only a makeshift solution, due to a lack of financial and human resources, but it remains the only realistic option at present that would make Pápay's invaluable collections and his original Hungarian translations accessible.

The workbook is intended as the first – and therefore not the only – publication in this series. A German translation, with linguistic and

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[1] Pápay, József & István Erdélyi 1972. 503.

explanatory notes, is planned as a supplementary volume. In fact, Edit Vértes does not rule out the possibility of adding translations in English and Russian. This would give the Pápay collection the widest audience of any work in the field of Khanty studies, were a publisher willing to distribute it through any technical means. The current photocopied test-run resulted in easily readable Khanty text, but the handwritten Hungarian translation is less legible, and the photographed words have also faded away in many more places. The text may pose some difficulties for readers who are not Hungarian native speakers.

Before delving into the content, I would like to share a few thoughts. It is increasingly rare these days for original Khanty linguistic and folkloric materials to come into academic circulation, and given the transformation of Khanty culture, this will only become less and less frequent. For example, the heroic epic song discussed here comes from the Obdorsk Khanty (in Russian: *priural'skie khanty*), a group one hardly hears anything about nowadays, even though they are a minority group of several thousand who have preserved their culture relatively well in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug. It was from them that Pápay gathered what is probably the most comprehensive collection of folklore material, and this is true of his Lower Ob texts as well. Today, Hungarian translations of the brief texts collected by students of the Herzen State Pedagogical University in Leningrad are presented in the journal *Nyelvtudományi Közlemények* (Linguistic Studies) as delicious morsels, and it would be a sensation if any Soviet expedition came across any archaic ethnographic facts like those found in multitudes in Papay's materials. With this in mind, we can rightfully ask why his collection, as he prepared it, should not become part of the public domain, at least in some provisional form. More than one inexpensive option for doing so exists today. The world-class team of Steinitz students could help with any philological additions once their project plan is complete. How could Pápay's inimical achievement, and his source material that is no longer accessible today, have become of such little interest to the Hungarian and international world of Finno-Ugric studies that they shy away from the difficulties of its first publication? Why is perfectionism in philology and publishing always more important than the value of the information itself?

The workbook includes a 636-line fragment of a heroic epic song titled "Song of the People of the Nadym River." It would have been helpful if the publisher had noted for reference that Pápay recorded this fragment in the winter of 1898–99 from an old Khanty man named *Pūrəś* 'Old', who

came from the village *χiš-pūγor* 'Sand Village'.[2] This singer – unlike the exceptional Nikolaj Selimov – was not exactly praised by Pápay [3], but not even his stumbles in performance can detract from the historical importance of this material.

First of all, it is worth pointing out the place from which the song originated. The Nadym Khanty are one of the northernmost Ob-Ugric groups living within close proximity to the Nenets. A surprising percentage of documented heroic epic songs can be traced back to them, and as a result, they are better known from these songs than they would be from just the occasional ethnographic report. In the first fragment from a Nadym song, which can be traced back to Reguly (informant: Maksim Nikilov, Sygva Khanty),[4] the heroes are, by line 1463, just approaching the city of the bride they wish to marry. Interestingly, even though this song is considered a relatively new type within the genre of songs about seeking a bride, it nevertheless contains archaic motifs: the defeat of dangerous underwater monsters and forest "elves" before the girl's city, as well as a hero with magical powers, who shoots an arrow made from his shinbone to clear away the boulder that is blocking their path.[5] From the same singer, Reguly also wrote down the "Song of Obdorsk,"[6] which represents the typical story of acquiring a bride, and its subtitle identifies it as of Nadym origin. Pápay's main Obdorsk singer, Nikolaj Selimov, began his repertoire with a heroic epic titled "Song of the Nadym People," complaining that the youth were no longer familiar with such works.[7] Pápay considered the fragments of three heroic epic songs to be of Nadym origin: the song mentioned here from *Pūrəś*, as well as a 112-line fragment[8], and one from Selimov.[9]

The current fragment in question suggests a song of the bride-seeking genre. It tells the story of the hero, leader of the city of Nadym, preparing to ask the hand of a certain "sister of the man from the edge of Horse [territory], leader of the seven heroic princes," who lives further south. This song title is thought-provoking. Pápay in May of 1889 transcribed the heroic epic titled "Song of the Elder of Tegi" from Grigorij Torykoptyn, of the Synja estuary

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[2] Pápay, József 1905a. 36.

[3] Pápay, József & Jenő Fazekas 1934. XXV.

[4] Pápay, József 1905b 138–218.

[5] Demény, István Pál 1976. 156.

[6] Reguly, Antal & József Pápay & Miklós Zsirai 1944. 2–165.

[7] Pápay, József 1905a 35.

[8] Pápay, József & Jenő Fazekas 1934. XXV.

[9] Pápay, József & Jenő Fazekas 1934. XXVII.

region (*ās-pūɣèl*, *às-korˊt* 'Ob village'), who came from a shaman family.[10] The title character is a powerful idol spirit, usually considered one of the sons of the Sky God, in the village of Tegi (north of Berëzovo along the banks of the Little Ob River), and he takes the animal form of a dog or a fox. He, too, marries the "sister of the man from the edge of Horse [territory], leader of the seven heroic princes" from the southernly "big city of the man from the edge of Horse," which lies along the banks of a similarly named creek. R. Radomski has surmised that the names are associated with a specific hero/spirit.[11] The song describes the heroes' journey to the city by rowboat. Their route can be easily recognized, as they travel from the Little Ob River to the Sosˊva in the direction of Berëzovo, and upon leaving the latter behind, back to the Ob. From here, their route takes them a mythical distance, beyond the "southern sea" found at the source of the Ob River. But we should consider the fact that in cultic songs even the Irtysh estuary region and areas further to the north are called "areas of the source" of the Ob River. Therefore, the only thing we can conclude is that they must have rowed for days across the floodplain lakes from some tributary of the Ob River (Little or Great Ob?) south of Berëzovo. In what follows, the storyline has the same features as Reguly's first Nadym heroic epic: a relatively late story about seeking a bride, peppered with mythical elements. In the land of the man from the edge of Horse, there are three mythical obstacles that the heroes from Tegi must vanquish: underwater monsters, winged idols, and forest *mēŋk* giants. The hero, in turn, slips through in the form of a dog to meet his bride. István Demény also noted the similarities between the two songs, which involve an initial war council and whose origins can be traced back to the same time period. He dates the spread of this type of bride-seeking song to the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries, to the age of heroes later revered as idol spirits, and he interprets the secondary proliferation of supernatural elements as a sign of cultural crisis and decline.[12]

At first glance, the name "City of the Edge of Horse [Territory]" brings to mind the village of Vežakary, which goes by the name "Small Land of the Clan(?) of the Edge of Horse"[13] in both Khanty and Mansi songs and is inhabited by members of the Kostin family. The village lies along the banks of the Great Ob River, south of the Kazym estuary. Found on the hillside on the other side of the river is the old fortress and sacred site, known as

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[10] Pápay, József & István Erdélyi 1972. 12–163.
[11] Radomski, Rosemarie 1985. 10–11.
[12] Demény, István Pál 1976. 156–158.
[13] Schmidt, Éva 1983. 358–359.

the "Running-Moving Horse-Shaped City," [14] or the more abbreviated colloquial form "Horse City." Variations of the name were summarized by Radomski,[15] and the sacred site itself was most recently described by Z. P. Sokolova.[16] This place is home to the famous idol known in Mansi as *jalp-ūs ōjka* and in Khanty as *jem-wɔš ĭki* 'Sacred Town (=Vežakary) Elder'. Since this idol takes the animal form of a bear, V. N. Černecov considered this the ancient origin of the primary totem of the *por* moiety.[17] He described the periodic celebration that was organized in his honor, held in Vežakary or Tegi, alternating every seven years, and wrote that this event reminded him of the extravagant, three-month-long bear festival.[18]

It is not in fact known why it happens to be in particular this northerly Khanty village along the Little Ob River that was associated with the cult of the Sacred Town Elder.

It is through the motif of transforming into a dog that the protagonist of the "Song of the Elder of Tegi" can be identified as the currently revered idol spirit, despite the fact that there is no reference to him "settling into an idol" at the end of the song. We cannot know whether other members of the heroic clan can also transform into dogs, but it should be noted that the dog is now the holy "totem" animal of the village. It was in this way that the hero protagonist managed to convince his bride to betray her seven brothers, and so the Tegi military was able to win such a glorious victory over the city of the "Man from the Edge of Horse" that hardly a person remained to tell the tale. This city does not have a hero whose description matches that of any idol spirit. But it is not necessarily essential to have a hero revered as an idol spirit, since only the most distinguished members of the clan of heroic princes later became respected idol spirits, and these songs detail the clashes of various generations.

We do not have an exact geographical description of the area around Vežakary. If we compare it to the song "City of the Man from the Edge of Horse," we find only a few features in common. These include having a location south of Berëzovo, and the presence of a creek, along which a fortress stands. According to the song, there are underwater monsters that guard this side of the fortress, and then moving towards the source of the river, where the seven tributaries meet, there is a "nest of idols with seven-

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[14] Steinitz, Wolfgang 1975. 287–288.
[15] Radomski, Rosemarie 1985. 8–9.
[16] Sokolova, Zoja P. 1971. 214–215.
[17] Černecov, Valerij N. 1939. 30–42.
[18] Černecov, Valerij N. 1965. 107–110.

fathom[19] wings." A little further on is a swamp, next to the edge of the forest, and on the other side of the swamp a wooded elevation, and on it the "iron-roofed house visited by a hundred *mēŋk*."[20] It should be noted that the Northern Mansi people draw a parallel between the *mēŋk* forest giants and the *por* moiety. This is expressed in *mēŋk*-like guardian spirits, forested places inhabited by *mēŋk*, dances performed wearing a *mēŋk* mask in the house of the bear ceremony and other holy places, and so on. The cultic significance of *mēŋk* here is very characteristic of Vežakary. Černecov described the ritual of the participants wearing frightening *mēŋk* masks as a special feature of the final portion that concludes the periodic ceremony. Instead of avenging the sins of the population, they carry male and female wooden puppets with them, and they travel beyond the Ob River to the upper stream of the creek, where their holy chamber can be found in the dense pine forest. Here they "execute" the puppets, leave the props in the chamber, and then return – all in utmost secrecy.[21] Of course, we could say that the song offers a much too generic description of this location. Wooden fortresses were mostly built alongside the mouth of a creek, and sacred sites were found further away, such as in forested areas, etc. In addition, *mēŋk* do also appear in other heroic epic songs. It is not impossible to imagine that at one point there was an idol spirit that was associated with the area and took the form of a bird, because multiple idols were honored, reflecting the different ranks and statuses within local society. For example, the current idol spirits of the district of Vežakary are the Knife Elder, Seven Elders of the Sacred Town, and the Lady of the Sacred Town = Horse Village Woman.[22] The only way to be certain would be to confirm the information with the local population. There is a single major advantage to the interpretation outlined above: It would explain why the ceremony of the Sacred Town Elder was held every seven years (through the 1940s) in Tegi – namely, because the wife of the Elder of Tegi was of Vežakary origin, and an unknown number of familial relations connected the inhabitants of the two villages.

However, Tegi may have another special connection to the north – this is why we have dwelt at such length on the "Song of the Elder of Tegi." The first part corresponds to the "Song of the People by the Nadym River," published by Edit Vértes. They share not only the element of traveling to the City of the

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[19] Translator's note: "Fathom" refers to an archaic measurement equivalent to about 3 meters or 10 feet.

[20] Pápay, József & István Erdélyi 1972. 48–51.

[21] Černecov, Valerij N. 1965. 109–110. See p. 107 for a photograph of the chamber and the figures wearing *mēŋk* masks.

[22] Schmidt, Éva 1984. 1221.

Man from the Edge of Horse but also other characteristic motifs. The songs come from Pápay's two informants of different dialects. Yes, even works of relatively distant origins can reveal surprising similarities. But how can we explain the fact that the closest parallels to certain episodes in the "Song of the Elder of Tegi" can be found in the first Nadym song fragment from Reguly? What link could there be between the Tegi of the Little Ob River and the inhabitants of the area where the Nadym River flows towards the Arctic Ocean? And, moving south, what link could there be to Vežakary?

It is possible that the Nadym song fragments that have not yet been published might contain relevant information. The same can be said of the other Khanty folklore materials that also remain unpublished.

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(English translation by Melinda Széll)

The Bequest of V. N. Černecov's Mansi Folklore Collection (1985)

In 1985, the year of the sixth International Congress for Finno-Ugric Studies, Valerij Nikolaevič Černecov, a pioneer in Western Siberian archaeology, ethnography, folklore, and linguistics, as well as Mansi cultural history, would have turned 80. His death in 1970 represented an irreplaceable loss not just for academia but also for the Ob-Ugric peoples themselves. More accurately, it is a loss for the entire family of Ugric languages, since Černecov, who claimed Mansi ancestry, enjoyed a level of unconditional respect and acceptance, even among his Hungarian colleagues, that is not often received by foreign researchers. We feel forever and unilaterally indebted to him for his work in the field of Ugric ethnohistory and culture. On the anniversary of the great researcher's birth, we can confidently report that through a collaboration between Soviet and Hungarian partners, we now have the opportunity to repay at least a small part of our moral debt, namely through the publication of Černecov's folklore collection.

As is well known, Černecov is the twentieth-century researcher who made the most extensive use of folklore material in his ethnographic and archaeological work and used his interdisciplinary knowledge to draw the most information from it. As a result, individual portions of his folklore collections have become integral parts of our knowledge even without us knowing the specific texts in question. The confidence with which Černecov could find a connection between two seemingly unrelated facts has always been impressive, as has the amount of experience upon which he based his associations of ideas. One could tell that this person, who as a young man without the help of Western grammars and folklore collections was able to directly learn the Mansi language and culture, worked from a different information foundation, even later, once he had gained exceptional familiarity with the international philological literature. His collections of Mansi materials represent one of the most important products of this formative early period.

Many facts suggest that Černecov himself considered this material important. During his Leningrad era, which lasted through 1940 and was characterized

by his simultaneous study of linguistics, folklore, and ethnography, he strove to publish the materials he considered the most important – albeit only in one language (Mansi or Russian), due to the unfortunate limitations of the time. This was how his 1935 book *Вогульские сказки* (Mansi Folktales), published in Russian, came into existence, based on the results of his expedition from 1933 to 1934 – to this day the best publication on this subject. He and his first wife, Irina Jakovlevna Ratnera – a linguist and teacher by training – jointly collected and prepared for publication a series of Mansi-language folklore books for children: *Man mojtanuv* (Our Folktales) in 1934, *Maṇśi mojt* (A Mansi Folktale) in 1935, and *Mahar-uj erьŋ* (The Mouse's Song) in 1936. In his ethnographic and archaeological work, Černecov frequently cited and paraphrased his own collections in Russian translation. In his body of work, it is evident that he provided clarification on the most valuable materials, sometimes with multiple types of transcription – and his translations into Russian provide yet more information. But even the collector's oh-so detailed interpretations do not plumb the depths of the materials' hidden information. The publication of his Mansi collection offers not just a glimpse into Černecov's process but, supplemented by his journal notes in Russian, the collection also represents the richest source of folklore for Ob-Ugric studies from the last half-century.

What makes Černecov's collections so valuable? Primarily it is that they reflect the artistic products of Mansi shared consciousness based on *inside* information but with the objectivity of an *outside* observer. This combination had not been seen in earlier historical periods, and Černecov embodied it just in time to document the last phase of traditional Mansi culture from the late 1920s to the 1940s. The incompleteness of earlier linguistic researchers' collections was a result of many unfavorable factors. They were foreigners, they were not folklore specialists, their attention was occupied with other types of tasks, and they struggled with the difficulties of transcribing by hand. They had to travel enormous distances in a relatively short amount of time, they had to adjust to extreme cultural and linguistic differences across various groups, and the populations they worked with were not used to them personally or to the requirements of their philological work. Černecov's linguistic training did not measure up to that of his predecessors – and it must have been especially lacking during his first expeditions[1] – and neither

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[1] There are some indications that during the period in which the northern peoples' standardized alphabet was developed (1930–1931) and the first Mansi textbook was published (1932), not all of even Munkácsi's publications had reached Černecov. And even if they had, he would have hardly understood the Sosʹva Mansi postposition *māγəs* 'for, because' as a variant of *mavъs*.

was he a folklore specialist (true, folklore still to this day has not become its own field within Ob-Ugric studies), and his transcriptions are more hurried than average. In other respects, however, he was the herald of the new era to come, which saw the development of native speaker researchers collecting their own source materials.

In evaluating Černecov's collections, we must understand both the historical period that defined his beginnings as a researcher and the unconventional system of information within Ob-Ugric society.

For the Soviet researchers of the 1920s and 1930s, tasks of unprecedented size stood before them – along with equally large opportunities. In Czarist Russia, there had been no tradition of researching the languages of the country's many small ethnic groups, but as a result of their experience in Siberia, members of the exiled opposition would go on to found world-class schools of ethnology. Understanding Siberia and ending the backwardness of the region was such an urgent and practical task that anyone who managed to master a local language was seen by both the Soviet government and the local population as a universal intermediary of sorts. Despite the difficult economic and travel conditions, an unbelievable number of small expeditions set forth, reaching even the most isolated areas; economic, administrative, cultural, and academic organizations competed with one another to (often simultaneously) hire the young Siberian studies expert. With demand coming from multiple sources, this situation obviously did not allow them to immerse themselves in the study of philology, but it proved to be an advantage in the long run. A whole, universal reality was reflected in the young experts of the time. As a result, they developed a knowledgeable view of reality, informed by the collective consciousness of the local peoples – including an understanding of nature and even practical skills. This, along with their shared interest in building a new life, brought the researcher and the subject of the research together in such proximity that in the best case they practically became part of one another – an unimaginable occurrence in the Western ethnography of the time. The field of Siberian studies was very practical in those days: it was driven by the interests that the native population wanted to realize, and any kind of alienation would have seriously threatened their effectiveness in achieving these goals.

The fate of both the Siberian peoples and the academic fields studying them took a positive turn when the state recognized the special status of its ethnic minorities and began to treat them as a separate category for administrative purposes. In public administration, a department of ethnic minorities was created in 1922 within the People's Commissariat for Nationalities (*Narkomnac*), and soon after, the subdivision dealing with northern ethnic

minorities was established (*Poljarnyj podotdel upravlenija tuzemnymi narodami Severa*), which relied in its decision-making on the distinguished experts employed by the ethnography department (*Ètnografičeskoe bjuro*). In recognition of the enormity of the tasks at hand, the Committee of the North (*Komitet Severa*) was formed based on all of these institutions. Created during the general reorganization of 1924, the committee reported directly to top leadership, and academic research enjoyed a privileged position even in its preparatory program. Despite the small populations of the peoples in question, the nation's highest authorities took their issues into their own hands: A. V. Lunačarskij, P. A. Krasikov, and F. J. Kon came from the party apparatus, and there was collaboration among ethnographers Bogoraz-Tan, Sternberg, Živkov, Karcelli, Buturlin, and Ostrovskikh. As a result of this organization's work, the 1926–27 Siberian census and economic survey – the world's largest such effort at the time – was conducted, and it served as the basis for later permanent ethnic and administrative divisions. Under the leadership of P. G. Smidovič, the Committee of the North operated until 1935, at which point its functions were taken over by the newly strengthened regional organizations.

Academic research of northern peoples and professional training were at first affiliated with the higher education institutions of Leningrad, and the leading figures of Russian Siberian studies kept a watchful eye over these developments. Bogoraz-Tan and Sternberg had prominent roles in professional academic training and the training of ethnic minorities, just as they did in personally encouraging Černecov to pursue the field. As the professor of the ethnography department of the Geography Institute from 1921 on, Bogoraz-Tan was in charge of the education of a generation of ethnographers who have since become famous. The principles developed from Bogoraz-Tan's own fieldwork experience helped shape Černecov's legendary versatility, and these principles remain relevant to this day. Two of Bogoraz-Tan's statements about interdisciplinary connections can serve to illustrate this. On the relationship between ethnographic research and language: "Knowledge of the studied people's language is an essential requirement for successful ethnographic fieldwork. Only the field researcher who knows the language has the opportunity to study cultural phenomena in the specificity and completeness of real life." On the relationship between folklore and the study of history: "Folklore is the document archive of peoples without writing. Word by word, folk memory carefully preserves this treasure, whose guardian is the local language, archaic and rich, full of turns of phrase that can no longer be found in everyday language use. This

is why folklore must always be transcribed in its original language without abbreviating anything."[2] In tandem with Bogoraz-Tan's efforts, many other departments of the University of Leningrad, the Leningrad Institute of Living Eastern Languages, and the history and social science departments also provided training to Siberia researchers of various calibers.

It was in 1925 that native Siberian peoples first appeared at the University of Leningrad, where a separate northern group was established for them within the employee faculty. The following school year, this was combined with the preparatory courses of the Institute of Living Eastern Languages, and from 1927 on, it operated as the northern faculty of the Eastern Institute. In 1930, it was renamed the Institute of the Peoples of the North and became an independent educational institute – its descendant today is the department of northern peoples' languages at Herzen Pedagogical University. Bogoraz-Tan was the heart and soul of the institute, and the main person responsible for organizing events was Sternberg's student Ja. P. Koškin. Thanks to valuable political support, this institute of learning developed exceptionally dynamically even in the midst of economic difficulties, providing its hunter-fisherman students from the taiga with increasingly comprehensive preparatory courses and multidisciplinary curricula. The training covered the entire scope of tasks related to cultural and political organizing at the time; during breaks, the students traveling home were expected to do their local propaganda work, such as economic surveys and folklore and linguistic collection. The first generation of trained professionals proved to be incredibly active and self-aware. The greatest tragedy of the Siberian peoples is that World War II practically wiped out this generation. With the establishment of native-language education, the teachers and students of the Institute were drawn into tasks of mutual teaching and learning, and their relationships grew even stronger and more equal as a result. Siberian researchers of the 1930s could already come face to face with confident members of northern ethnic minorities whom they themselves had helped educate and who were literate, trained for philological work, and in those days completely familiar with traditional culture. And as with Steinitz and Černecov, they emerged as dedicated intermediaries.

Without all this background it would be difficult to understand the start of Černecov's career and the early days that led to his folklore collections. Černecov was born in 1905 the son of a famous Moscow architect and despite the pan-Ugric myth about his origins, he was in fact Russian. In his youth he was drawn to the technical sciences until at age 18, with the help of

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[2] Omel′čuk, A. K. 1982. 7.

a relative, he joined a geodetic expedition in the Ural Mountains, serving as a radio operator. Having spent two seasons in the lands of the Upper Loz′va and Sygva Mansi, he not only learned their language and "rediscovered" their culture but he was also to a certain degree accepted by them. The law of large numbers guarantees that the cultures of populous groups will be studied, but for small ethnic groups it is often a matter of chance. Today it is hard to imagine what the fate of Ob-Ugric studies, of the Mansi people, and of Černecov himself might have been, had he not happened to go on that first Uralic expedition. Bogoraz-Tan, sensing the potential in the twenty-year-old geodesy student, encouraged Černecov to join his ethnography course at the University of Leningrad, and he graduated from the program in 1930. From there, thanks to Koškin, he ended up an aspirant at the research department (*Naučno-issledovatel'skaja associacija INS*) of the newly established Institute of the Peoples of the North, tasked with developing Mansi literary language standards and primary school textbooks. In this effort, Černecov collaborated with the rural teacher P. Je. Khatanzeev, an adventurous Nenets man who grew up among the Obdorsk Khanty. It was thanks to their collaboration that we can attribute the following surprising fact: when the unified Latin-based alphabet was developed for northern languages in 1930–31, it happened to be the Ob-Ugric primers that were published first, even though there existed virtually no literature in Russian about these languages at the time. With his Mansi grammar and dictionary, Černecov filled this gap as well, and he then began preparing his series of folklore publications. This latter activity followed two relevant initiatives. First, these introductory works in Russian were intended to give the reading public a taste of the countless cultures within the Soviet Union, drawing their attention to the diversity of their country and also helping them comprehend it. Second, the cultivation of new national cultures among ethnic minorities obliged academia to return the most developed aspects of folk culture to the peoples themselves, in print. In those days there was no thought given to producing bilingual philological publications – and unfortunately, these still to this day do not exist among the Ob-Ugric peoples – but the first task was accomplished by the dedicated and enthusiastic experts who worked on the Russian-language publications that introduced the Ob-Ugric peoples to the reading public. From the forewords they wrote to the way they handled the materials, their work was as rigorous as any academic publication (this applies equally to Černecov, who published folklore in prose, and to Avdeev, who published Mansi folksongs). In 1935 Černecov transferred to the Institute of Ethnography of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, happening to switch

places with Steinitz, who with the help of Koškin had gotten a job around the same time at the Institute of the Peoples of the North. Between 1925 and 1938 Černecov conducted fieldwork virtually every year. In accordance with his interests dating back to his days as a university student, he focused primarily on archaeological expeditions, but he also collected folklore on a regular basis. From his Moscow era on, which began in 1940, he added hardly any more material to his collection, and even though he continued to be available to linguists and folklorists in a consultative capacity, he stopped actively collecting folklore.

Černecov was welcomed by the Upper Loz'va Mansi families named Jelesin and Bakhtijarov – an especially open, western marginal group who served as mediators and played a decisive role in Reguly's and Munkácsi's successes, along with countless earlier Russian expeditions. This is where Černecov's Mansi name comes from – "Loz'va man" (*lūsəm χum*), which he proudly used in his early Mansi publications. His positive reputation and likability among his chosen people grew proportionally to his experience. As evidence, it is enough to note that the residents of the since depopulated village Vežakary (*jalp ūs*) held the extravagant ceremony of the "moietal totemic ancestor," the Clawed Elder, who takes the shape of a bear, just for Černecov's sake; they did so outside the usual cycle and allowed him to take photographs and notes, and they even dictated the carefully guarded song lyrics to him.[3] And now it is worth delving into the Ob-Ugric informational system.

It is common knowledge that social categories can affect how different ethnic groups share information, much like how they shape behavioral norms. Social prescriptions related to the transmission of information can vary by historical period and geographic area: among the Ob-Ugric peoples, they were culturally bound to the territorial macrounit of a given dialect (such as Northern, Eastern, and Southern Mansi and Khanty). The Northern Ob-Ugric norms from the first half of the twentieth century that pertain to sharing and receiving information (including proficiency in using the information and passing it on) can be divided into the following binary categories of self/other. (1) Based on ethnicity: Ob-Ugric / not Ob-Ugric, and for further distinction, Siberian native / European. Those in the latter category, if they were not Komi, were seen as Russian. Within the Ob-Ugric category, there is usually no distinction between Khanty and Mansi, given that there is no difference in the social structure or culture of the two

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[3]   This material was published in Hungary after its author's death; see Tschernjetzow, V. N. 1975.

peoples' macrogroups; only their language and sense of identity sets them apart. (2) Based on moiety: *moś/por*. As exogamous classes with a functional role, this system appears to be characteristic of the northern group within a specific time period; it operated without respect to ethnic distinctions. (3) Based on the consanguineous group: blood relative / not a blood relative. Here the term used in the traditional literature and in Černecov's early works is "clan"; in later writings, he used "totemistic genealogical group," and Z. P. Sokolova used "genealogical group." This level can be further broken out into degrees of blood relations. Because of exogamy and patrilocality, this binary partially overlaps with the native/newcomer binary. (4) Based on sex: male/female – in cultic life, this overlaps with the binary clean/unclean (=adult woman), and for the latter, this entails serious restrictions on information. (5) Based on age: adult / not an adult, both with their own age-related subcategories. (6) Marital status: married / not married, and within the latter: not yet married / no longer married. This category likely also includes whether one has children. (7) Place of origin: native/newcomer. (8) Besides clean/unclean, cultic life also features the binary initiated/uninitiated – this depends on whether one has inherited the responsibility of caring for the family idols after the death of one's parents. Information whose restriction would seriously endanger the integrity of the society (= territorial macrogroup) exists in different variations based on social category. This phenomenon is less directly observable when soliciting ethnographic data about everyday life. It can be seen more clearly in the case of creative works, where different variations can be in fact documented. For example, it is those who have the first trait within each oppositional pair (that is, older, initiated men) who know the most complete version, in song or prose, of the epic folklore related to the idol spirits of their consanguineous unit. There is usually a prosaic version for individuals who are close but not blood relatives, and there is a simplified, folktale-like version for children. For those who are complete strangers, there is a version from which all specific social references have been removed.

In Ob-Ugric society, which has clear divisions along regional and dialectal lines, social and informational interactions were enabled and regulated by traditional mechanisms like seasonal economic mobility, exogamy from the moiety or genealogical group, regular visits to commercial or administrative centers (going to the market and paying taxes), and the idol spirit cults associated with social groups of various sizes. It was the latter that provided a framework in which related communities with an idol spirit in common could secure their relationship through jointly held, cyclical ceremonies.

With respect to high-ranking gods, however, it was the individuals who were required to go on long pilgrimages. The mechanisms for the transmission of information operated more or less along these lines: the communication partner was first categorized based on the familiar/unfamiliar binary; if the former, then relative/not relative, and then direct/indirect acquaintance, with the latter then categorized by ethnicity and function. For an Ob-Ugric individual who was a complete stranger in an ethnic environment, it was necessary to demonstrate kinship to gain equal status with one's communication partner, at least in the sphere of idol spirits. One could also be accepted by way of adoption, marriage, or taking on some kind of cultic function.

Societies typically restrict the flow of information more heavily in areas where they sense a threat to the stability of a certain relevant state or its optimal realization. Thus, typical restrictions apply to, for example, fertility or the lack thereof, death, all kinds of magic, the ruling social group, cults, and mediators. In preliterate societies, one of the most widespread methods for preserving historical information is transferring a time in the community's own past to the supernatural sphere, tying it to some kind of cult or, ideally, to a ceremony or tradition, and transforming its verbal aspects into formulaic works of folklore and its other aspects into a series of actions and material attributes. In this respect, the Northern Ob-Ugric peoples have a few uncommon traits. First of all, they do their best to make everything related to social organization – including cults that carry relevant or historical information – unrecognizable and unidentifiable to those who belong to the category "other." This category fully applies to those in the European ("Russian") category, but it appears to also pertain to members of distant macrogroups in the same region, and more recently it has also expanded to cover the Russified descendants of these communities. Most restrictions are about information specifically related to identification: thus, it is not a matter of not being allowed to know of the existence of certain societal units or cultic figures. Rather, the restrictions make the connections more obscure: it is difficult to find out which genealogical group and moiety an individual of a given family name belongs to, which idol spirit is associated exclusively with this individual's group, and furthermore how all of these factors relate to equivalent categories. The reason that social organization is barely reflected in the traditional academic literature, and descriptions of religious phenomena are so poorly organized and contradictory, is that the basic information was provided to foreign researchers in an intentionally disorganized form. Objectively, this phenomenon is obviously related to

the contradictions of Ob-Ugric history, its repeated primitivization, and its constant defensive position. For several centuries now, certain subsections of the culture have begun to diverge and conflict. As new economic relations and migration have disrupted the social system and its functions, it has grown increasingly difficult to reconcile reality with cultural traditions and cultically preserved history. Perhaps the system of social connections has also been growing hazy for Ob-Ugric people themselves, but individuals and communities have not been as confused as they have displayed outwardly. In her foundational monograph, Z. P. Sokolova dedicates an entire chapter to the question of Ob-Ugric clans.[4] In reviewing the literature so far, she draws attention to the contradictory use of the word "clan" and its lack of substance, as well as to the fact that most researchers cannot name even one specific clan. In a large table, she summarizes the main data points for each genealogical group, listing their names, totemic ancestors, family names, villages, and moieties. Most of her northern data comes from Černecov, and it constitutes just a fraction of the culture's many family names, villages, and idol spirits. Based on the available materials, no better summary exists, but the question still remains to be answered: What do the groups with the same "totemic ancestors" have in common, if the basic unit is the genealogical group? It is, after all, not uncommon among the Ob-Ugric peoples for very different villages (ideally seven in total) to have the idol spirits of the same name and animal form; in the past, their worshippers viewed each other as relatives, and restrictions around marriage applied to them. Černecov's groundbreaking insight – based on inside information – was that the cult of the ancestors, as religiously coded history, can be used to reconstruct earlier eras of social organization, and it can often be used to document the events of history as well. It is no coincidence that the Mansi-born Je. I. Rombandeeva depicts the Sygva ancestral cult as having exactly the same structure that Černecov did.[5]

<div style="text-align:center">*</div>

After Černecov's death, the archaeological portion of his collection ended up in the archive of the Institute of Archaeology of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, while the rest of the materials remained with his widow, V. I. Mošinskaja. In 1979, recognizing the value of her husband's Mansi collections, this exceptional archaeologist and researcher made it the final

[4] Sokolova, Z. P. 1983. 119–162.
[5] Rombandeeva, Je. I. 1984.

task of her life to attend to these remaining portions of his work, even as she faced incurable illness. She came to the conclusion that the place best suited to store, process, and publish this material, so diverse as it was in its nature and topics, was the State University of Tomsk. Operating within the auspices of the university is one of Western Siberia's finest research centers (*Problemnaja naučno-issledovatel'skaja laboratorija istorii, arkheologii i ètnografii Sibiri*), which plays a prominent role in the collection and analysis of academic materials related to this region. The presence of N. V. Lukina as the head of the ethnography department guaranteed that Černecov's epoch-making materials would be treated in accordance with their historical significance. According to the preliminary agreement, it was in December of 1979 and January of 1980 that Mošinskaja delivered the materials to the university, where they were stored in the archive of the Archaeological and Ethnographic Museum. The same year, following Mošinskaja's death, heirs Ja. I. Mošinskaja and her husband, B. A. Čajkovskij, offered the university additional items and personal effects that had since been found, along with Černecov's entire academic library. They also provided personal information to greatly facilitate the organization and labeling of his body of work. The world of Finno-Ugric studies is indebted to V. I. Mošinskaja and her relatives, as well as the leadership of the Tomsk University. As a result of their selfless cooperation, Černecov's complete and unified body of work, with the exception of his archaeological contributions, is available to researchers.

The guardian of the collection, N. V. Lukina enthusiastically began working on labeling and organizing the materials and completed this work in record time. At the same time, it was decided that the most valuable materials in Russian that were under N. V. Lukina's care at the University of Tomsk – the expedition journals and collections of materials on various topics – would be steadily published as internal publications. To get a rough picture of the enormity of this endeavor, let us briefly review the contents of the collection.

Category	Number of items	Number of handwritten pages
Expedition journals (1925–1938)	23	1596
Other expedition-related material	3	242
Linguistic material	1	81
Thematic analyses	7	956
Museum materials	2	55
Černecov's literary works	1	48

Folklore texts (translated into Russian)	1	230
Folklore texts (Mansi)	16	1441
Other: notes and outlines	1	150
Drawings and illustrations	13	474
Photo positives	21	–
Photo negatives	42	572 items
Film footage (positives and negatives)	19	–

It was clearly beyond the scope of the Siberian experts' project plan to decipher and publish the 39 to 45 items in accordance with international standards (publication of such collections being one of the most developed branches of Ob-Ugric studies). The untranslated Mansi material was transcribed in notebooks and constituted 1441 pages total. In June of 1984, the University of Tomsk provided the Ethnographic Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences with xeroxed copies of these materials, as part of a collaboration between the Soviet Ministry of Higher Education and the Hungarian Ministry of National Development, along with the personal intercession of its minister Béla Köpeczi. We would like to express our gratitude to everyone who worked to make this unique international collaboration possible.

By November of 1984, the Černecov materials that had been shared had been practically fully deciphered and described, with their storylines summarized in Hungarian and Russian. With some brief statistics we can get an overview of the richness of the material. The contents of the 17 folders comprise about 192 individual items, but 10 of the items are clarifications of the contents of previously registered field journals. The total page numbers listed do not provide a realistic picture of the quantity, because multiple items can appear on a single page. The distribution of materials by genre is as follows:

Genre	Number of items
Myths	3
Folktales labeled as myths	2
Hero epics	1
Heroic legends	12
Belief legends	23
Other types of legends	11
Folktales in total	50
About the *moś* and *por*	5

About the Old Woman's Grandson	13
Other Mansi folktales	13
Russian folktales	19
Bear songs in total	8
Songs about the origin of the bear	3
Songs about its killing by a cultic figure	2
Songs about the bear's punishment	3
Ghost dance songs from the bear ceremony	14
Animal songs from the bear ceremony	11
Materials related to the performance in ritual disguise during the bear ceremony	1
Bear-awakening songs	1
Shamanic songs	1
Non-cultic animal songs	2
Other songs	3
Lullabies	2
Nursery rhymes	4
Riddles	28
Memorates	1
Ethnographic information	9
Fragments	15
Other items	2
Linguistic notes	4

By total page count, heroic legends comprise the largest category, with about 250 pages in total, followed by more than 150 pages in the categories for the folktale series "The Old Woman's Grandson" and Russian folktales. There are about 100 pages of myths, belief legends, folktales about the *moś* and *por*, and other folktales, as well as ghost dance songs from the bear ceremony. The pages are, of course, handwritten sheets from notebooks.

For readers familiar with Ob-Ugric folklore, I would like to draw your attention to a few interesting items. The most valuable poetic item is the 533-line heroic epic in the Konda dialect about Nakhrači, one of the central figures of Eastern Khanty mythology – it is incredible that Černecov was able to document this in the southern region in 1933. Also in Konda is the well-known northern folktale "The Tale of the Mouse" (in a game of hide-and-seek, an elk ends up swallowing the mouse and thus falls prey to the rodent). In this version, the protagonist is a rat who is identified as the Old Woman's Grandson, and the victim is thus a bear and takes part in the bear ceremony.[6]

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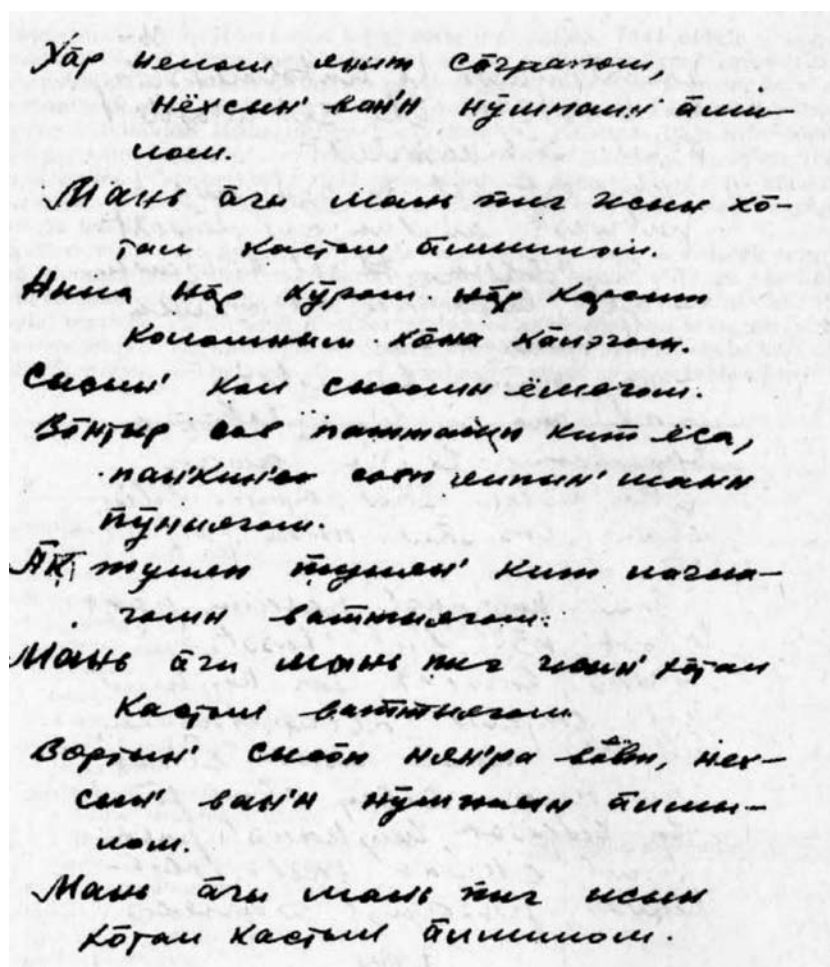
6   For a version of this folktale, see Kannisto, A. 1956. 100–117.

The myths include the "The Heroic Tale of Marrying the Girl Kalteś," which Munkácsi had also transcribed, but in this version the protagonist visits the Water Prince in search of a bride. There is a version of the heroic epic song of the Clawed Elder, the guardian spirit living in Vežakary in the form of a bear, as well as another bear song, associated with his name, in which, acting as a cultural hero showing an example for man, he kills the bear and orders that his actions be followed. In one subtype of bear songs, the holy animal is described as being of human origin. Among the belief legends, there are dozens of bloodcurdling stories of the meetings between humans and supernatural beings. In many of them, it is the appearance of the idol spirit of a clan or moiety that saves the human protégé from a tight spot.

Figure 1.

The collection features materials collected on the following expeditions: the Konda and Tap river region (1933), Sos′va tributary (1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937), Sygva tributary (1935, 1936), Ivdel′skij district (1938), and Ob tributary (year unknown). Until 1935, Černecov transcribed his materials using the standard Latin alphabet of the literary language. Later, he used various eclectic diacritics to supplement the Setälä phonetic alphabetic in its simplified form, and he marked vowel length inconsistently. Some of the texts about which he provided additional clarification are in the Cyrillic alphabet, while others use a more precise phonemic transcription. Since we cannot know retrospectively which phonemic variants were spoken by the informants and which exact meanings they intended, the most practical approach is to standardize the material with phonemic transcription and according to the Munkácsi dictionary published by Béla Kálmán.

Figure 2.

Such a massive collection can only be published in multiple volumes. In terms of its structure, it seems appropriate to divide it by genre, which has been the traditional approach ever since Munkácsi, first featuring materials in the Northern dialect and then those in the Konda dialect. In addition to the usual philological apparatus, it would be essential to republish Černecov's Russian-language journals in Hungary in a supplementary volume, accompanied by an index of reference materials; otherwise, the texts presented as self-evident to the initiated would be indecipherable to European readers. We hope that this collaboration between Soviet and Hungarian experts, along with the support provided by their countries, will minimize the traditionally long time it takes to prepare Ob-Ugric works for publication, thus providing the field of Finno-Ugric studies with the materials of one of the Soviet era's most exceptional field researchers. After this, all we can hope for is that the similarly valuable collections of the first Mansi and Khanty linguists, Je. I. Rombandeeva and N. I. Terëškin, whose materials contain even more inside information, will expand the Soviet academic collection into a series.

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(English translation by Melinda Széll)

Nikolaj Ivanovič Terëškin 1913–1986
(1991)

The field of Finno-Ugric studies suffered an irreplaceable loss when Nikolaj Ivanovič Terëškin, the foremost expert in Khanty language and culture, passed away on February 28, 1986. He is such an important figure in Khanty culture and twentieth-century history that his life story and his very person – despite his own eccentricities – are almost symbolic. He was one of the most prominent representatives of the unique, irreplaceable generation born in the final years of czarism. This generation, starting out from a traditional northern culture of fishing and hunting, embarked on thousands of years of development in a single lifespan. As a researcher, he was equally integral to Finno-Ugric studies; his work was always awaited with special interest by other researchers. It is worth commemorating his life and work in much more detail, because we hardly knew him, thanks to his exceptionally private nature.

Terëškin was born on December 24, 1913, when his parents fled the early twentieth-century famines for the area alongside the Sogom River. One day, his father left his lonely accommodations to go hunting, and the greatest fear of every Khanty family came to pass: he never returned. Terëškin's mother then traveled onwards along the trails of the taiga to gather morsels for herself and her infant son. Later, she migrated to the banks of the Nazym River, where tragedy struck again: one day, she did not return from the forest. By some miracle, relatives traveling through the area came across the half-starved two-year-old Nikolaj. They adopted the orphan and settled in Belogor′e, which is the most important village of the Irtysh estuary region and is known for its role as the local holy place of the World Surveyor Man. As a result of these events, Terëškin's native language ended up being the Keuši dialect, a transitional variant of the northern and southern dialects.

He was fifteen by the time the village school was built and he had the opportunity to learn his letters. He completed three grades in a single year, and with the help of his stepbrother over the summer, he mastered the necessary knowledge for the preparatory course at the Northern Department of the Pedagogical Institute in Tobol′sk. After three years of studying in

Tobol'sk, he ended up on the banks of the Irtysh River again. Upon the establishment of the Khanty-Mansijsk District in 1932, the local teacher training college became responsible for the professional training of the local ethnic population. There was such an urgent need for teachers who spoke the local language that Terëškin, a student at the time, was entrusted with teaching adults "Soviet courses" in his native language. As the teacher training college's top graduate, he earned a position at the boarding school in Polnovat, the district center of the Kazym River estuary region. He is still remembered to this day in the place where he began his career, and the most accurate description of him I have ever heard was from an older Khanty woman: "He was a special person. Despite his youth, he never spoke without thinking – he was that serious. And whatever he did say was always true." The People's Education Department of Khanty-Mansijsk also took note of this talented young man. After a year, they transferred him to the highest forum of professional training of ethnic minorities, the Institute of the Peoples of the North, in Leningrad.

At this time, the Institute of the Peoples of the North was home to a vibrant intellectual scene. It served as both an educational and research center, where the most active youth of the northern peoples worked alongside – and were respected as equal partners by – well-educated researchers and educators, all united in their goal of revolutionizing Siberian culture and conditions. As a talented researcher of the Khanty language, Terëškin caught the attention of both D. V. Bubrikh and W. Steinitz. Upon completing his studies, he passed the entrance exam for the aspirantura program in the fall of 1940, but as history would have it, there were more difficult tests in store for him. Almost immediately, he was mobilized into the army.

In the summer of 1941, his reconnaissance unit, which he led as second lieutenant, was deployed in defense of Leningrad. In this city, most of the northern peoples' men served as snipers and scouts; this was one of the bloodiest parts of the front. Fishermen and hunters were enlisted from the villages. Like their first generation of carefully trained intellectuals, their numbers dwindled in battle, day by day. The empty spaces left by their deaths sealed the fate of their entire people. In the spring of 1944, Terëškin himself was hit by dozens of pieces of shrapnel, which left him seriously maimed. He was sent to the city of Omsk, to which the Institute of the Peoples of the North had been evacuated from Leningrad. As he put it, seeing the deaths of starving students – the northern peoples' most talented – was even harder than being at the front.

In 1945, at Leningrad State University, he continued his studies as an aspirant under Bubrikh's supervision. Upon completing his studies,

he joined the Marr Institute. He worked for its successor, the Leningrad Division of the Institute of Linguistics of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union, until his retirement. Because of his difficult living conditions, he did not marry his wife, a Konda Khanty woman, until later in life. He lived a quiet, withdrawn life, working in considerable isolation, since there were no Khanty researchers of his caliber nearby.

The task of promoting and transmitting their entire culture fell on the shoulders of the northern peoples' first generation of intellectuals – despite the fact that they had literally just come out of the woods. This is why Terëškin's contributions include much more than just the academic publications for which he is known within the world of Finno-Ugric studies – these constitute only a fraction of his work. From the beginning, his work was split into several different lanes, which sometimes supported each other and sometimes were in conflict. He began by establishing the necessary groundwork for teaching and public education. In the 1950s, his mission was to create alphabet books and textbooks in all the various dialects, and to develop the "literary languages" needed to facilitate the translation of mainly Russian works of literature. There is probably no Khanty publication written in the Cyrillic alphabet that Terëškin did not contribute to in some way. In this area, his greatest achievement was creating books for teaching the eastern dialects (Vakh and Surgut) and developing their applicable teaching methodology. He understood all the problems of developing literacy among a non-literate traditional people, with the approach of twentieth-century civilization.

In Russia there was little tradition of descriptive research of Ob-Ugric cultures that would have served as a foundation for this work. Only Patkanov's collection of Irtysh Khanty texts was available, along with several glossaries and some basic teaching aids. For the Soviet government, it was Terëškin who had to discover and write descriptions of the various Khanty dialects – dialects that could differ from one another to the point of incomprehensibility – and travel, despite his crippling disability, to all the areas along the river to gain an overview of their cultures. The collections he put together captured the grammatical systems and unique features of local vocabulary, serving both educational and research purposes. The linguists (Steinitz and Balandin) paid attention to the eastern dialects, and Terëškin made it one of his main research goals to develop linguistic descriptions of them, learning these dialects almost like a foreign language. This is how his dissertation was born: a monograph on the Vakh dialect of Khanty, as well as his crowning achievement, an Eastern Khanty dictionary, unparalleled in its value, which he worked on for decades.

He paid no less attention to his people's disappearing traditional culture, including folklore. In the post-war years, to his everlasting credit, he managed to save the best of Nizjam Khanty folklore, which was yet unknown but very sophisticated. Everything, from the most archaic sacred genres (myth, heroic epic, summoning song), through the entire bear ceremony repertoire, to folktales, was recited for him to capture. This demonstrated the level of trust and confidence that informants had in him. His Kazym collection is similarly valuable, and he has smaller collections from all the dialects. He had no opportunity to translate and publish his work, so we can only hope that his body of work, consisting of several volumes' worth of source material, grammars, and dictionaries, will be appreciated by future generations.

In addition to his academic research, Terëškin was constantly involved in educating his people's intelligentsia and maintaining native-language publications. For a long time, he was the Khanty lecturer at Herzen Pedagogical College, and he taught Khanty-Mansijsk summer language courses and continuing education courses. It is one of the great failings of the academic organizations of the time that they did not secure the training of a successor, although his former students E. A. Nëmysova (Kazym) and G. Pesikova (Pim) would have been sufficiently qualified. With his death, the Khanty people lost their only internationally recognized researcher, and just as traditional culture enters its last few decades, there is no worthy successor in his wake. He once remarked about his life: "I felt that my people had sent me and I must serve their interests under all circumstances. Perhaps it was no accident that I survived so many times." The maturity and professionalism of his generation looks more and more impressive with the passage of time.

Terëškin was the No. 1 consultant on Khanty language and culture within Finno-Ugric studies (for example, in deciphering Karjalainen's Southern Khanty collection). He was one of the researchers awarded honorary membership by two Hungarian academic societies (the Hungarian Linguistic Society and the Hungarian Ethnographic Society). We know that the world is in a constant state of change, and that every single person is irreplaceable, but at the turning points in history there arise those who are even more irreplaceable...

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(English translation by Melinda Széll)

MYTHOLOGY

Bear Cult and Mythology of the Northern Ob-Ugrians (1989)

1.

When studying Vogul and Ostyak culture, the researcher faces a dual problem. (1) On the synchronous (typological) axis, Ob-Ugrian culture appears as Siberia's westernmost, strongly marginal cultural type. The features, the place and functions within the system of the elements clearly traced in Central Siberian cultures become so blurred in the Ob-Uralian region that they are often hard to even identify. The question of determining the type of Ob-Ugrian shamanism could be mentioned as an example. (2) On the diachronous (historical) axis, the Ob-Ugrians represent a case
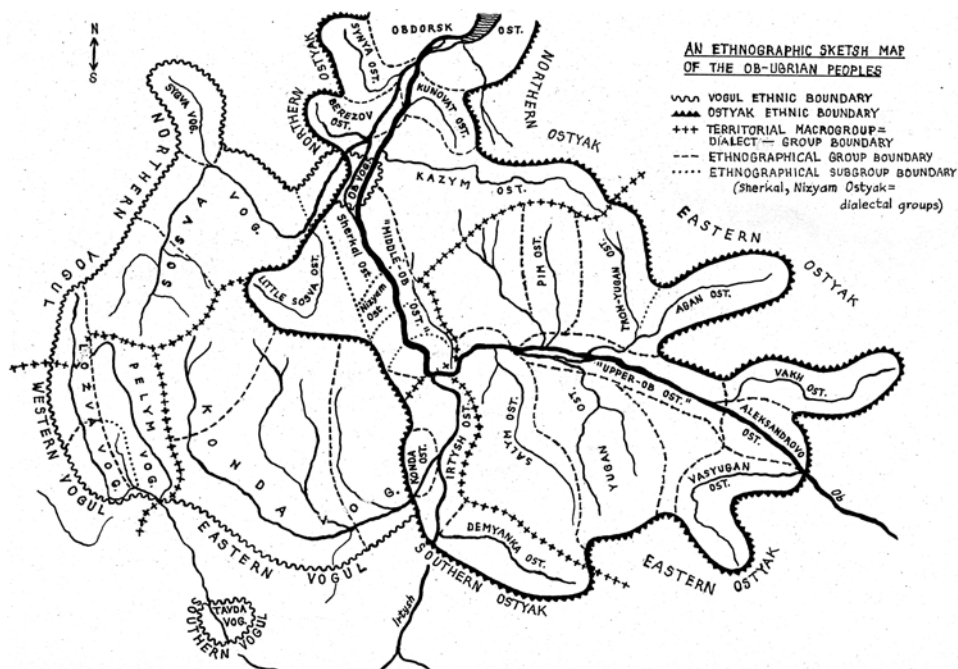
Figure 1.

of multiple primitivization. This, apart from disturbing our European consciousness, accustomed to linear development, constantly raises the problem of the possibility of confusion between archaisms and neologisms and the impossibility of demonstrating reconstructions.

The present paper elucidates, with a descriptive and frequently hypothetical approach, a hitherto ignored aspect of the bear cult, so characteristic of Ob-Ugrian culture. As it is a summary of a larger study, I consider it to be the main objective to suggest the system-relationships, and will have to dispense with monographic argumentations. (See *Figure 1*.)

2.1. The system of the northern Ob-Ugrian world-concept

On the basis of the belief-world and folklore, roughly the following world-picture may be assumed, in terms of the vertical and horizontal axes,
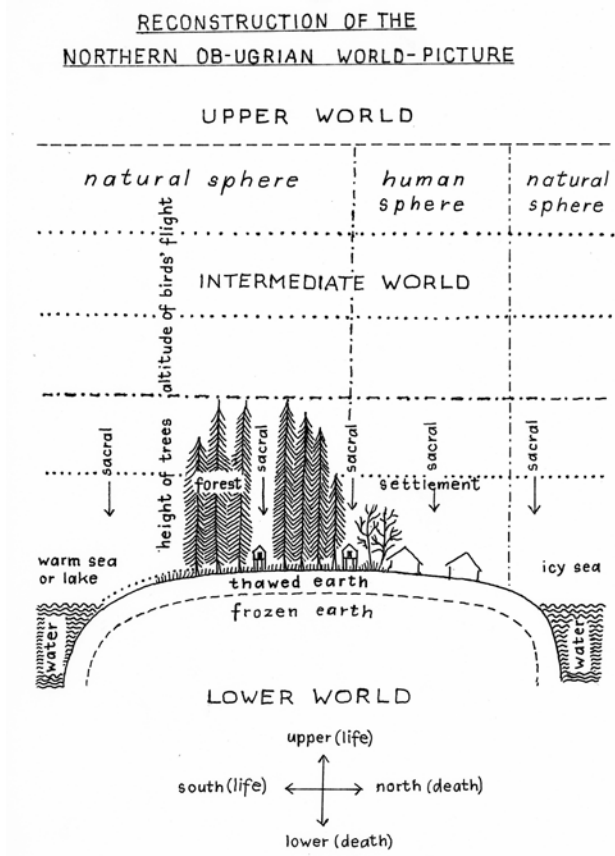
Figure 2.

reflecting similar principles. (See *Figure 2*.) The universe divides into worlds, the world divides into spheres. An intermediate position at any level preconditions the functions of connecting-dividing and mediation. NB, this scheme is a scientific abstraction, which does not necessarily correspond to the present folk consciousness.

2.2. Sphere-representing and mediating animals

To the spheres certain characteristic animals may be assigned as representatives. The most important of them are also known as peculiar aspects of mythical or belief personalities, symbolized in animal form. Others can be identified only at the other levels of consciousness (value system, order of customs, profane folklore etc.). Certain animals move in several spheres, thus acquiring a mediating role (e.g. on the horizontal axis, the wild goose migrating in a north-south direction is the animal aspect of the god World Surveyor Man). On the vertical axis, there appear two "dark"-signed mediators, connecting all the worlds: the loon and small diver – the animal form of the Lord of Disease/the Lord of the Nether World – and the bear – the animal figure of the Sacred Town Elder guardian spirit associated with the *por* moiety. While the mediating role of the bird can be explained from its actual characteristics, the bear could only have been given such a wide-ranging function through an amalgamation of the historical layers of its cult. In mythology, both animals have, as their counterposable "light" opposite, the human (or possibly the goose, horse) aspect of the World Surveyor Man.

2.3. The system of animals mediating between the earth surface and the lower world

The lowermost, but still "warm"-signed "thawed earth" sphere of the middle (human) world is a region of transition to the world which, situated beneath it and beginning with the "cold" layer, is alien to humans. Its representatives are characteristic, downward oriented mediators.

	terrestrial	aquatic
large	(1) BEAR	(2) beaver, otter
small	(3) MOUSE, vole, mole etc.	(4) water-rat etc.

Their shared characteristics – physical and behavioural similarity to man, dark colour, complete or partial withdrawal from the earth surface in winter etc. – sharply mark off this group from the other mammals. Because of the ambiguity of their dwelling place, their inclusion in the sphere of the forest and the earth is ambivalent. Members of the "large" category have the signs of "sacred" and "clean", while the "small" ones have opposite properties. Category (1) is the most strongly marked, (4) is the least marked. Within a particular category, the animals may be conceived of as variants of the same archetype; for instance, (3) = MOUSE. In reducing the oppositions, first "terrestrial"/"aquatic" (4) → (3) and then (2) → (1) may be converted into one: for example, in the Pelym Vogul bear songs the taboo name for bear is "... otter" (Munkácsi 1893: 521; Kannisto & Liimola 1958: 279, 291). In the "small"/"large" opposition, the amalgamation of the remaining (3) → (1) can be justified on the grounds that the soul of the bear – that is, the more subtle manifestation of its principle – is generally held to be mouse- or mole-shaped. Therefore the entire system can be traced back to a single archetype and principle, namely, the BEAR. In bear cult this is the basis of "lower", "earth"-signed bear-concepts.

3.1. Bear cult and the system of bear-concepts

Elements of the "bear" concept range pervade the entire Ob-Ugrian culture, creating one of the world's richest bear cults. The often-mentioned bear feast, bear-oath etc. are only partial manifestations of this. Why has the bear, of all animals, become one of the main organizing principles of the culture, and thus of the individuals' inner, emotional life as well?

The elements of the "bear" concept range and the related custom-acts stem from the component systems of the most diverse historical layers, each possessing a different context. In reality, they are syncretistic, they do not make up a coherent system. In the traditional literature, it was chiefly the versions of the bear's origin and of the first hero to kill it that provided the typological points of orientation (e.g. Munkácsi & Kálmán 1952: 19–33, 117–120). The most detailed review of Ob-Ugrian bear cult is the work of Béla Kálmán (1952: 15–164). A lead was taken in the direction of wider system-relationships by Černecov (1939, 1965, 1974 etc.), Haekel (1946), Kőhalmi (1981).

In the theoretical systematization of the mass of concepts we can resort to the following scheme. Certain traits and the functions based upon them

constitute motifs; arranging themselves according to certain aspects, the motifs constitute concepts, which thereafter become components of the constituent systems of the conceptual range. A sketchy representation of the concepts according to the horizontal and vertical axes and the spheres (see *Figure 3*). NB, given that the concepts themselves lack the logical
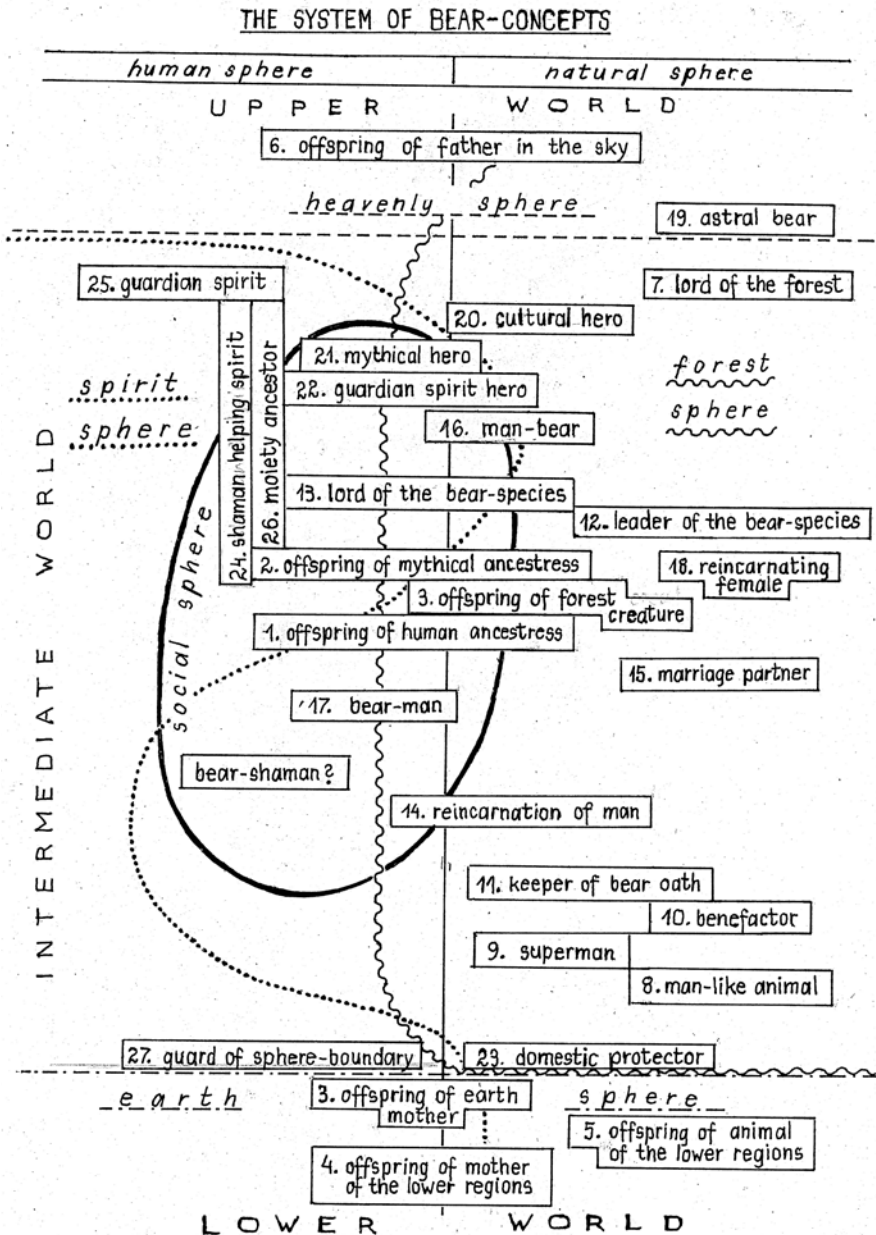
Figure 3.

requirement of a coherent basis of classification, their interrelationships and overlaps are hardly amenable to graphic representation. This maximum concept mass is not ideated in its entirety in the consciousness of the collectives, but its concrete reflections can be arranged according to similar principles.

The concepts of the component systems can briefly be summarized under the name "bear", signed "upper (sky)", "lower (earth)", "intermediate (forest-, human-)", "spiritual" etc. The bear vertically connecting all three worlds is a blending of two mediators – namely, (1) of the mediator between the upper and the intermediate worlds and (2) the mediator between the intermediate and the lower worlds. In what follows, we shall concentrate on the latter.

3.2. The interrelationships between the bear cult and shamanism

East of the Ob-Ugrians, the notion of what is called the "bear-shaman" is widely known. In this, the bear is generally a representative of the lower, the "earth" principle. With the Ob-Ugrians, it is Karjalainen's data on the eastern Ostyaks that have the closest bearing on the relationships between the bear and the shaman. This refers to the bear-shaped helping spirits of the shamans of the easternmost groups (cf. 5.5.3.), and it can also be expressed in the attributes of the shaman (Kulemzin 1976: 78). Karjalainen's most intriguing reference tries to convey that those capable of magic can, on occasion, themselves turn into bears (1927: 36). But Karjalainen also remarks about the northern Ostyak shamans that, similarly to their eastern counterparts, they appeal to a bear-shaped spirit in order to save a sick man's soul (1921: 73, 84; 1927: 283–284).

On the basis of the monographic literature, northern Ob-Ugrian shamanism belongs to the "possession" type: the function of the spiritual journey is transferred onto the possessing guardian spirit. That is probably the reason why – as Haekel noted with surprise (1946: 152) – the characteristics of guardian spirits are, in many respects, reminiscent of the traits of the shamans of Siberian peoples living further to the east. In such cases, the aspect of the bear-shaman is to be sought in the guardian spirits possessing the shape of a bear. The most significant among them is the "lower"-signed, Sacred Town Elder, belonging to the *por* moiety.

4. The BEAR and the MOUSE[1]

Prior to reviewing the bear concepts, let us briefly look at the concepts relating to the MOUSE and the special relationship of these to the bear. It is clear from the terminology that (1) there are frequent overlaps in the names of small rodents (Kálmán 1938: 25); (2) the descriptive names suggest that their names may have been taboo. The negative, "unclean" aspect of the earth is expressed in several, e.g. Kazym Ostyak 'mouse' *nampər/ tăpər wɔj*, 'dust/dirt animal' (collected by the author, 1980), Middle Loz′va Vogul *ľüľ-uj* 'bad animal' (Munkácsi & Kálmán 1986: 286) etc. The mole, also because of its partial terminological and functional similarity, can be discussed together with the mouse.

4.1. General concepts

Beliefs are polar manifestations of the "lower" sign. A Konda Vogul deluge myth mentions the mouse as part of the genesis of lower-world animals (Kannisto & Liimola 1951: 17); eating of its meat makes man unclean (ibid. 97; Kannisto, Liimola & Virtanen 1958: 181). The mole can be a herald of death (Kazym Ostyak: Karjalainen 1921: 87–88), but elsewhere its skin has the function of driving away disease (Sygva Vogul: Gemuev & Sagalaev 1986: 24).

In folklore, the MOUSE (or the hero turned into a MOUSE) is generally successful. From our viewpoint, the first thing to mention is its association with healing; for instance, the woman turned into a mole gets between the skin and the flesh of the wounded hero in order to extract the pieces of armour that have lodged themselves there (Demjanka Ostyak: Karjalainen & Vértes 1975: 1–25[2]); it is by the agency of the vole that the *mōś*-woman acquires the secret of the medicinal herb (Sos′va Vogul: Kannisto & Liimola 1951: 221–227); the bear sends the mouse to fetch the medicinal herb (Obdorsk Ostyak: Pápay 1910: 72–77). Its sphere of action is increased by the fact that, unlike spiritual beings, it can get at unclean and inaccessible places as well. In a northern Vogul folktale it is the mouse that digs the hole leading to the Lower World (Černecov 1935: 28–32). The heroes, chasing each other across the spheres in the shape of various animals, can turn into mice; or they do that when they have to solve some special tasks (for more

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[1] The capital letters signal the invariants of the different animals.
[2] In the folklore references the page number of the whole narrative is given.

detail see Munkácsi 1910: 310); perhaps they assume the sphere of a mouse for the purpose of gathering news (southern Ostyak: Karjalainen & Vértes 1975: 140–163). In the above works, the mouse is an ancillary figure, or its shape helps the hero achieve his object more safely.

4.2. The MOUSE in relation to the guardian spirits

Including here moiety symbolism as well, this is highly contradictory – maybe, partly on account of the polarity discussed above. Of the guardian spirits, it is the northern Ostyak Kunovat Elder who has the animal figure of a mouse (verbal communication by N. I. Terëškin) and the Sacred Town Elder has the shape of a mouse as a secondary figure (cf. 6.1.3.).

From the mouse's own folklore, it is in the variants of the "Mouse tale" that some faint myth can be suspected. It is usually its first two moves that are recited as children's tales. (1) The mouse, travelling on a boat, declines the poor-quality fish that some children invite him to; yet, he eats so much of the roe of sturgeon that his belly bursts. The children sew it together. (2) While playing hide-and-seek with a reindeer, the latter gobbles him up. With his knife he rips the reindeer's belly open, and he and his family eat the reindeer's flesh (Sos′va Vogul: [only the 2nd move] Balandin 1939a: 26–27; in a sung form: Avdeev 1936b: 108–109; Sygva Vogul: Kálmán 1976: 52–56 etc.). So far it can be found in any Ob-Ugrian school primer. In the 1st move, the mouse's greediness (Šul′gin 1969), in the 2nd, its cunning is usually underscored. A few versions also include a 3rd move: the mouse joins forces with various household implements to embark on a campaign of revenge against a *mēŋk* (sylvan giant) who has trampled his children to death. With his companions' assistance, he slays his adversary (Sos′va Vogul: Černecova & Černecov only the 3rd move: Balandin 1939a: 31–34). The Konda Vogul versions are most interesting. Here the mouse, aided by the household implements, avenges the death of his companions on the Town Lord[3] in whose pantry they had been wreaking havoc. Yet, the mouse himself gets killed in the battle too. The new mouse-husband of his widow is sent for food by his (the husband's) aunt. Setting out on a bear hunt, in a parallel story with the 1st move, he does not eat; in an episode echoing the 2nd move, he is attacked by a bear, from whose belly he escapes by means of the trick described there; then there follows a feast and a bear song

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[3] 'Lord, War-Lord' – Ost. *urt*, Vog. *ōtər*, term for a guardian spirit as a real human leader.

(Kannisto & Liimola 1956: 113–117). Černecov's Konda version contains the 1st and 2nd moves corresponding to the Sos′va version, yet with the bear instead of the reindeer (No. 1466, text 7).[4] Terëškin's Nizjam Ostyak manuscript variant classes the story with the heroic epics of the guardian spirits. After moves 1–2, the mouse proposes to the Town Lord's daughter. Refused, he takes revenge by destroying the Town Lord's pantries with his army of mice. The war is ended when it is revealed that the mouse is the Sacred Town Elder in animal shape. The bride turns him into a man by her kiss. In a Šerkal Ostyak heroic saga too the Sacred Town Elder outwits his opponents in the shape of a mouse (collected by the author, 1982).

In these stories, the mouse is a dangerous, one might say, consuming creature. If we tried to apply the moiety principle to his opponents, arranged in a chain sequence (*mēŋk* – Town Lord – bear), they would belong to the *por* moiety, like the Sacred Town Elder. It may be the case that, as with the bear, the range of ideas of the MOUSE breaks down into a few fundamental concepts, which is what makes it contradictory.

4.3. The MOUSE in relation to the bear

On the basis of its physical appearance and movements, the MOUSE may be conceived of as a miniaturized version of the bear. In the case of the mouse, it is more its native environment (moving underground, on the surface, and on high objects) – i.e. its sphere-references – whereas in the case of the mole it is more its exterior, its colour and its sluggish movement that can be identified with the bear. Bán (1913: 219–220) explained the mole-shaped soul of the bear from the physical resemblance and the soul-carrying function. The MOUSE stands for the more subtle and "lower" aspect of the bear.

As attested by the northern bear songs, the function of the MOUSE-shaped soul of the bear is to enable him, after the feast, make his way from the house through the forest back to the Sky God, by a ladder. In some places, the receding of the bear is imagined in the shape of animals of increasing size (mouse, ermine, wolverine – e.g. Sos′va Vogul: Kannisto & Liimola 1958: 372–373).

With that in mind, we may discover some symbolic significance in a humorous scene – featuring among the dramatic performances of the

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[4] On the basis of an international agreement, the copies of the Vogul-language folklore texts of Černecov's estate are kept in the documentation department of the Ethnographical Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. I refer to them by the accession numbers under which they can be found there.

bear feast – in which a hunter, bragging of his bravery and insulting the bear, panics and even faints on seeing a mouse that has suddenly appeared (Gondatti 1886b: 81; Karjalainen 1927: 217; Avdeev 1936a: 172; 1936b: 33; Rédei 1968: 42 etc.).

5. The system-relationships of the more important bear-concepts

Owing to lack of space, I here touch upon only those aspects that enable the discovery of a new concept, interrelationship or reconstruction. The concept of the astral bear is not important from the standpoint of our topic, for its mention see 5.3.4.

5.1. The origin of bears and the typology of their mediation

The majority of the myths relating to the origin of the bear can be traced back to an archetypal scheme where two, generally supernatural parents belonging to opposite spheres produce a third kind of being, who will then belong to the intermediate sphere. The change of sphere denotes, at the same time, mediation. This shows two kinds of dynamics: (1) a change of spheres horizontally, from society to nature ("forest"), and (2) a transition between worlds vertically, from the sky to (the interior of) the earth.

   The legends vary in whether or not they name both parents. The majority of them keep the identity of the parent with the more negative sign a secret from both the offspring and his environment. The initial, dominant trait of the offspring can be determined according to the sphere rearing him. It is an obligatory motif that, owing to the properties inherited from the more negative parent, the offspring becomes unruly and assumes the shape of a bear – if, that is, he has not been one already. He is compelled to leave the environment that has nurtured him, yet, he cannot make it to the other parent, but becomes instead an inhabitant of an intermediate sphere/world.

5.1.1. Bears with horizontal dynamics

Theoretically, these could be the purest representatives of totemic relationships, though that is difficult to prove. Their mother, with human traits, is a representative of the mythical or legendary ancestors; still, she cannot really be identified with any concrete female guardian spirit. It is she

who rears the offspring. His father is a sylvan being. The typology of these mother-dominated human-bears:

(1) *Mother: a lord's daughter; father: mēŋk* (supernatural sylvan creature): 1st, 3rd concepts. A legend for which there exist concrete local data from the southern, Irtysh Ostyaks. The daughter of the lord of the old fortress by the village of Kulpokhovo – with her hairy face, she already anticipates some bear-like features – takes up with a forest *mēŋk*. Their son slays his playmates, and the villagers drive him into the forest together with his mother, where he stays to live as a bear. That sort of relationship between the human ancestors and *mēŋk*s was no rare phenomenon (Patkanov 1897: 125). It is mostly explained in totemic terms: Kharuzin 1898, 11: 7; Pavlovskij 1907: 181; Bán 1913: 210, see moreover Munkácsi & Kálmán 1952: 30–31.

(2) *"The boy who has departed into the forest I":* 2nd concept. Versions according to the mother:

(a) Mother: *mōś* woman; father: unknown. According to its Sygva Vogul variant, a lonely mother forbids her son to venture too far to play. When he disobeys her, the village children run away from him, shouting "the *mōś* woman's son is coming". He realizes that he has turned into a bear. He turns on his mother, who tries to hold him back, forbidding her to cross the forest boundary, and goes into the forest for good (Černecov's file, No. 1472, text 2). The *mōś* woman's son is mentioned by Avdeev (1936b: 29) and Sokolova (1972: 73). Nor can it be ruled out that Gondatti's variant, with the unidentified heroine (1886a: 72; 1886b: 79), also applies to her. The *mōś* woman mother motif also occurs among the formulas of the Sosʹva Vogul bear songs: the bear's paw is compared to a cushion sewn by his *mōś* woman mother (Kannisto & Liimola 1958: 150).

The advantage of this legend is that the mother's moiety is known. The father is believed by Černecov to be a *por* man (1974: 288). In this, however, there would be nothing strange, nothing to hide; the hostility of the community and the boy's aggressiveness would remain unexplained. A *mēŋk* father, as suggested by the previous type, would sound more convincing. Marriage between a human and a *mēŋk* is held to be possible by popular belief. The northern Voguls associate the *mēŋk*s, like the bear, with the *por* moiety. Their shared characteristics: large body size, dangerousness (feeding on humans), relative clumsiness etc.; for their identification on other grounds see Bán 1913: 215. In bear folklore, "bear" and "*mēŋk*" are sometimes used as parallel words (Munkácsi 1896: 254). Černecov's two records also mention that, in the Sygva Vogul village of Munkes, belonging to the *por* moiety, and

in the Ob-Vogul Vežakary, players wearing *mēŋk* masks perform, in front of the bear, a dance that those belonging to the *mōś* moiety are not supposed to see (No. 1467, texts 15 and 17). Thus the legend could be taken to mean that the *mōś* woman's marriage was correct from the standpoint of moiety, but not from the standpoint of sphere.

   (b) Mother: *śopər* woman; father: unknown. The story of the northern Ostyak "Song of my *śopər* mother" is similar, but the initial prohibition is missing, and, when the departure to the forest takes place, the mother prescribes for her son the laws of life in the forest, his return to the house of men, and the ritual of the bear feast (Pápay 1905b: 106–116). The song was clearly interpreted as the origin of the first bear. The northern Ob-Ugrians may have taken the two kinds of mother to be the same; that is supported by the fact that the bear song formula referring to the *mōś* woman as a mother, quoted above, also exists in a version containing a *śopər* woman (Kannisto & Liimola 1958: 48, 112).

   The cult of the *śopər/kami* woman – and frequent mention of her as the mother of the bear – is characteristic of the southwestern groups; but here the moieties are so blurred that it is not worth even trying to guess concerning them. Towards the north, a latent '*śopər/kami* woman ~ *mōś* woman ~ the Goddess Kalteś' identification at the centre of the "bear" concept complex allows the axis of mediation to be inverted.

5.1.2. *Bears with vertical dynamics*

The power of mediating between worlds presupposes parents of a god-like order. Their offspring is an instrument of mythological modelling, rather than one of concrete moiety relationships. It reflects a more advanced, later concept-world. Of its laws it should be pointed out already at this early stage that bears with a "lower", "earth" sign have a maternal dominance, while those with an "upper", "sky" sign have a paternal dominance. In the eastern Ostyaks' world of beliefs, based on impersonal sphere-spirits, the above thesis does not apply: here the bear, conceived of as the offspring of the Earth-Spirit, has a paternal dominance (e.g. Vasjugan Ostyak: Karjalainen 1927:10, 23).

5.1.2.1. "Lower" bears with a maternal dominance. Lower → intermediate world mediator "hero" bear. "The boy who has departed into the forest II"

The most elaborate system of concepts is to be found in the Voguls with a culture southwestern in character, at the upper reaches of the Konda,

Pelym, Loz′va, and the Northern Sos′va, which have a strong relationship with each other. Here the song of the origin of the bear was begun with the myth of the creation of the world, whose culmination is the rise of the bear. One of its structural features is the fact that it portrays all three worlds, in such a way that it divides the "lower" member of the "lower"/"terrestrial"/ "female" and "upper"/"celestial"/"male" opposition into a pair of opposites – i.e. the "subterranean" and the "supraterranean" – represented by two ancestresses. A similar division of the "upper" member results in two men, the Sky God and his mediator, the winged Kalm. After the world has been brought into its final shape, one of the women gives birth to seven boys, who gradually acquire the world order. As a last stage of this, they come into conflict with the underworld, which now means death, rather than birth. After an unsuccessful attempt at gaining the upper hand, the eldest "hero" boy turns into a bear and departs into the forest (cf. 5.4.2.).

The world-picture of these myths is so well-elaborated that its characters can, without difficulty, be interpreted as representatives of the primordial elements: Sky God = ether; winged Kalm = air; *śopər/kami* woman = earth; Princess of Disease = water; eldest son (bear) = fire. This myth is characterized by the female characters taking the initiative. Its types according to the mother:

(a) Mother: *śopər/kami* woman; father: Sky God; offspring: with an "earth" dominance: concepts 3, 6. The crusty Earth Mother is created to be the size of the spindle of the Princess of Disease (= underworld). The Sky God, by the agency of the winged Kalm, has her lashed with a whip; from her interior the human ancestress: the Kami mother (= earth) rises. The eldest of her sons will be the bear (Loz′va Vogul: Munkácsi 1892–1902: 100–127).

(b) Mother: Princess of Disease; father: (Sky God); offspring: with an "underworld" dominance: concepts 4, 6. The Princess of Disease (= underworld) and the *śopər/kami* mother are created simultaneously by the Sky God. The latter he encircles with mountains etc. to prevent her from turning too fast (= earth!). The former he teaches – by the intermediary of the winged Kalm – to multiply. The eldest of her sons will be the bear (Upper-Sos′va Vogul: Munkácsi 1892–1902: 77–99).

These variants of the myth come from the northern part of the area; their archetype may have originated more to the south. They consistently conceive of the bear in "lower" and "female" terms, which corresponds to the cult of the *śopər/kami* ancestress, practised in the area. The "hero"-bears featuring in it are the purest manifestations of the healing ancestor who

establishes the world order and at the same time mediates in the direction of the underworld. From the standpoint of the reconstructions, they are key personages. Theoretically, as two aspects of the "earth" sign, they could be regarded as one, were it not for the presence, in the northern Ob-Ugrians, of a separate "underworld" bear-concept.

5.1.2.2. "Forest" bear born of a small diver (bird) mother: concept 5

In a song about the bear's origin, which shows the influence of bird-songs for the bear feast, out of one of the diver's three eggs a bear hatches. It hibernates, is later killed by men and then a feast is held (Sos′va Vogul: Kannisto & Liimola 1958: 86–94). The featuring of the small diver (Vog. *lūliɣ*) corresponds to the image of the Princess of Disease as mother, yet without involving the human sphere.

   The concept of descent from an underworld parent may be a residue of the bear's association with the "other world" of the archaic, bipartite world-view. This accounts for the bear's links with everything that pertains to the other half – the dead, the ancestors, spirits, hidden fecundity and rebirth, otherworldly possessions and knowledge, heroes and healers descending to the underworld, – in brief, the totemic world-picture. Its psychological equivalent is the world of the unconscious.

5.1.3. *"Upper" bears with a paternal dominance:* concept 6

At present, this is the most widespread type at the surface of consciousness. The amount of research carried out into it (summary: Munkácsi & Kálmán 1952: 19–28) allows us to treat it only briefly here. It represents a more advanced historical layer, containing elements of the steppe. It is highly popular with the northern Ob-Ugrians. Actually, it is a type that can be traced back to a single invariant.

   Father: Sky God; mother: mostly unknown. Since, of the three worlds, the opposition of only two is present, the bear is a first-generation upper → intermediate world mediator. The types according to the narrative invariant:

   (a) One-move version. The female or male bear – perhaps as yet in human form – is being raised in the rich house of the Sky God. His father, about to go hunting, imposes a prohibition on his charge to make sure that, in his absence, he (or she) does not learn about the lower world. The latter breaks the prohibition, and through a hole it catches a glimpse of

the seductive earth. At his request, his father lowers him by a chain, in a cradle, forbidding him to destroy man and his possessions and prescribing the principles of correct conduct. Down there, the bear is disappointed in the riches of the earth and violates the injunction. The hunger afflicting him turns out to be his father's punishment. He picks himself up and prepares for the winter sleep (e.g. Munkácsi 1893: 1–33; Pápay & Fazekas 1934: 24–34; Schmidt 1983b). His killing by the mythical hero is thereafter discussed in a separate song.

(b) Two-move version. As a continuation of the above, the hibernating bear is bagged by the sons of the Town Lord or some hunters whose identity is impossible to establish and a ceremonial is held in the standard fashion (e.g. Kannisto & Liimola 1958: 9–28, 52–85; Senkevič-Gudkova 1980: 250–254; Černecov estate, No. 1468, text 27).

(c) Other, incomplete or mixed variants (e.g. Munkácsi 1893: 34–58, 109–125; Kannisto & Liimola 1958: 52–71; Pápay 1905b: 248–259; Karjalainen & Vértes 1975: 113–114).

The northern songs never name the other parent – this is analogous with the type of horizontal dynamics. On the basis of the vertical type with maternal dominance and a distant Konda Vogul version naming the mother (Kannisto & Liimola 1958: 52–85), we may regard the "earth"-signed *śopər/kami* woman as the mother – she it is who attracts her offspring down. A creature of this kind does not mediate in the direction of the underworld. The dominance of father/god/sky manifests itself in rules concerning food: the taboo of destroying man, his spoils and cattle, and the dead and the idols; the precept of eating plant food. To this can be added the charge of destroying sinners, those breaching the bear oath. Its psychological equivalent is the world of consciousness and morality.

5.2. The interrelationships of the bear and the "forest" sign

Since part of the inner essence of beast and man is the same, social relationships can be projected onto the system of the animal world, divided into species, and onto the hierarchical organization within the particular species. The more objective basis of these projections is the animals' hierarchy and the symbiosis between man and beast, while its more subjective basis is psychological animal symbolism.

5.2.1. The role of the bear species in the world of the forest

According to concept 7, the bear is lord of the animals of the forest. This notion, widespread in Siberia and among the Russians too, is conspicuously weakly represented in Ob-Ugrian culture. Sporadic expressions of it can be found in beliefs (Kazym Ostyak: Rédei 1968: 38) or in folktales (e.g. Obdorsk Ostyak: Pápay 1910: 78). On the subject see Karjalainen 1927: 9; Kőhalmi 1981: 136 etc.

It is characteristic of the Ob-Ugrians that, while at least twenty of the taboo names of the living bear reflect a relationship to a senior person of authority (Bakró-Nagy 1979), their attitude towards the killed bear, at the bear feast, is of the sort one adopts towards a younger person. They teach it its place in the world order as a child newly reincarnated in the human sphere. Thus the bear feast's folklore, and often the belief as well, portrays the bear as an inferior relative of animals that are insignificant compared to it (Munkácsi & Kálmán 1952: 46–51). At the same time the killed bear functions as a special kind of spirit at the bear feast.

The bear's power over other animals is seen most clearly in the eastern Ostyaks, where it is also revered as the ordainer of hunting spoils (Kulemzin 1984: 85). With the northerners, that is more the function of the local guardian spirit, but bear songs do contain references to the killed bear as "lucky (i.e. spoils-giving) lord of the game of the forests/fish of the waters" (Pápay & Fazekas 1934: 131). In the earliest cult layer, comprising fertility magic and the notion of the animal rising from the dead, as well as in the totemic ancestor cult, it could indeed have been regarded as a power influencing the life of the animal kingdom (Černecov 1974: 311). In the latter respect, it is worth noting Avdeev's interpretation, according to which numerous acts of magic aimed at producing animal fertility and spoils and numerous acts of prophesying, performed at the bear feast, only acquire validity for the future due to the presence of the bear (1936a: 173; 1936b: 36). The "lord of the forest" concept seems to be attached to killed and celebrated individuals.

5.2.2. The system-relationships of the concepts within the society of bears

5.2.2.1. The bear populace

The average bear individual is characterized by the following concepts in its relation to the average human individual. Its human and superhuman

qualities (cf. 5.3.1.) have continuations on two lines. First line: concept 10, whose motifs could be summed up under the phrase "benefactor". Here belong the notions which, by the intermediary of parts of the bear's body, transform its power into a healing power (remedies made from the bear) and a protecting power, one that brings good fortune (amulets from parts of the bear's body) – and also the belief that the bear can help men who have strayed into its sphere (the forest).

The second line leads to concept 11, that of the "guard of the bear oath". The bear oath is one of the fundamental institutions of Ob-Ugrian law. The suspect physically insults an object symbolizing the bear (a part of the bear's body), saying, "the bear tear me apart in requital if the charge is true". The motif of the oath being watched may be contained in the description of the hibernation by any northern bear song, since the bear is watchful even in its sleep. This function is held to have been ordained by the Sky God, which is expressed in its purest form in songs on the bear's celestial origin which come from the region of the Sygva River (Vogul: Munkácsi 1893: 34–58; Ostyak: Pápay 1905b: 223–238; see moreover Karjalainen 1927: 8–9). In the Loz′va Vogul song on the "hero" bear – reflecting the southwestern traditions and, on the maternal line, bearing the "earth" sign – (cf. 5.1.2.1.; 5.4.2), the ordainer of the function is not mentioned (Munkácsi 1892–1902: 100–127). Departing into the forest, the first god-son, turned into a bear, calls on men not to swear falsely by him or else he will tear them apart. The Sky God can be suspected, even here, as the initiator, because, under the influence of northern songs, the motif of the god-sons swinging in the air appears inorganically in the story. In the north, this is a symbol of the father-principle and of being subjected to the law, occasionally simultaneously with the receiving of the function of the guard of oaths.

Through the institution of the bear oath, bears form, as it were, a controlling super society, sent down from the divine sphere, over human society.

5.2.2.2. The leader of the bear species: concept 12

In the Ob-Ugrians – with the exception of the eastern Ostyaks – the notion of animal species having a leader is not a marked feature. From the Pelym Voguls, there are data on species-leaders among bears and moose (Kannisto, Liimola & Virtanen 1958: 384). In the northern Voguls and Ostyaks, the leader-bear identifiable from variants of a single bear song can only be regarded as a species-leader insofar as belief holds it to be an animal existing in reality.

According to the first, prose version presented by Gondatti, the bear lowered from the sky is killed by the Town Lord's son. Since they violate the rules, the bear's soul cannot get back into heaven; instead, he gathers together an army of bears in the forest. After a few attacks, to prove his divinity, he tears the hero to pieces. The giant, spotted male bear lives in the Ural to this very day (Gondatti 1886b: 79). This communication has been used by many people (Kharuzin 1898, 11: 1–2; Pavlovskij 1907: 177; Veselovskij 1913: 357–358; Munkácsi & Kálmán 1952: 22; Sokolova 1972: 46 etc.).

Reguly recorded the Sygva Ostyak version as far back as 1844/1845; in it, the bear is helped by a special leader-bear in the campaign of revenge, and the Town Lord's son recognizes the bear's superiority (Pápay 1905b: 223–238). In Avdeev's Sos′va Vogul version the celestial origin is missing – though the bear, who again is helped by a leader with a celestial mission, is interpreted as the first bear lowered. The Town Lord, appearing as a hunter, gets killed (Avdeev 1936b: 45–50). Distant parallels of the motifs of this version: Kannisto & Liimola 1958: 328–339. It seems that the bear-leader can be substantiated with data only in relation to the Town Lord (the Town Lord's son) and in the function of avenger of the breaking of taboos (cf. 5.3.4.).

5.2.2.3. The problem of the lord of the bear species and the bear-killing, bear-shaped spirit-ancestors: concept 13

The bear leader performs only organizational functions, and has no power over the life and death of his fellow-bears. Those who have that power must belong in the category of superior guardian spirits.

It should be noted that among the traditions relating to the bear and the guardian spirits there are so many shared motifs that we may, indeed, regard the bear cult as a special variety of the cult of spirits. It could be proved about the guardian spirits as well – those of them that had the shape of the bear as their animal form – that in almost every regional macrogroup at least one of them was revered (cf. 5.5.4.). The motifs of the complex of concepts of the bear-killing spirit: the spirit is the central cult person of a given area; its animal form is the bear; it can be assumed to belong to the *por* moiety (??); according to its sung folklore, it kills a bear, thereby founding the bear feast. Its representatives are the following.

(1) *The Pelym God.* In the north, he is considered to be the Sky God's eldest son. Černecov mentions him as being of the *por* moiety (1939: 24). In contrast with the northerners, who give preference to the youngest son (the World Surveyor Man), those groups of the Voguls with a southwestern culture venerate the eldest son, though under a different name (Munkácsi

1892–1902: CCCXX). In their myths of the origin of the bear, which start with the creation of the world, it is God's eldest son that becomes the first bear (cf. 5.5.4.1.). In the north, in a Kazym Ostyak bear song of the Pelym God, the Sky God lowers to him the bear cub, conspicuously slow to grow, to be nurtured. On a boat journey, the latter escapes into the forest and grows into a terror-inspiring creature. Seeking to frighten him off, his nurturer shoots an arrow at him and kills him by accident. Thereafter he founds the bear feast (Pápay 1905b: 248–259). In the Sos′va Vogul version, the Pelym God himself is the slowly growing charge of the Sky God. Lowered to the earth, he becomes a famous guardian spirit. On his boat journey he shoots an unknown animal; this is followed by a description of the bear feast (Kannisto & Liimola 1958: 138–149).

The bear animal form of the Pelym God is just as obscure (cf. 5.5.4.1.) as the real reason for its bear-killing function. The motif of unintended murder clearly serves to hide the action. The story-lines outlined above have three important elements: the close, all but consanguineous relationship between the guardian spirit and the bear, the murder, and the founding of the bear feast. Analogues of the latter two may be found in the tradition of the two guardian spirits to be analysed in what follows – a tradition which, compared to that of the Pelym God, represents a clearer type.

(2) According to a verbal communication by N. I. Terëškin, among the Šerkal Ostyaks there is a known bear feast song of a certain *"Forest Lord"* (an unidentified guardian spirit?). The hero is forbidden by his parents to seek out far-off hunting-places; he breaks the prohibition and is attacked by a bear. Grabbing it by its ears, he smashes the bear against a tree and kills it. He takes it home, and his father berates him for having destroyed, out of ignorance, a sacred animal. They found the bear feast. As the person of the guardian spirit is unknown, we can have no information about its bear form. But the formulas of the song show a conspicuous homology with the song of the Sacred Town Elder, whose animal form is known to have been that of the bear (cf. 5.5.4.4.). It cannot be ruled out that this and the text collected by Terëškin really reflect the same tradition.

(3) *The Sacred Town Elder.* After the above, the relationship between the bear shape and bear-killing function of the guardian spirits, which would support the "lord of the species" concept, may still be in doubt. In the person of the Sacred Town Elder, however, all the requisite motifs are present: the animal form of the bear, the killing of an individual belonging to the same species – according to the beliefs, as well as the cultic songs – the founding of the bear feast, and membership of the *por* moiety. For a more detailed analysis see 5.5.4.4.

The interpretation of bear songs is rendered difficult by the fact that their sacral language rarely, if at all, allows the real name of the bear-killing hunter to be used. Even in the histories of real hunting expeditions, the participants are mentioned under their clan names or occasional heroes' names. The majority of the heroes of the songs, featuring under taboo names (e.g. two or three men with bows and arrows, two or three men who shot a wild goose etc.) cannot be identified. Having said that, it can be stated that the folklore contradicts the view held by Soviet researchers that the ancestors belonging to the *por* moiety cannot have been bear-killers. The fact of the matter is that *por* bear-killers – including the sons of the Town Lord – are far more frequent than those belonging to the *mōś* moiety, where the World Surveyor Man is the only figure with reliable data pointing in that direction. Totemic cults do not preclude that possibility, as all the rituals – including the killing, which is not murder, but the first, indispensable phase of rejuvenation/rebirth – were founded by the ancestors. These ideas are perhaps supported by a hitherto uninterpreted element of the Sos′va Vogul bear feast ritual. During the eating of the bear's flesh, the bear-killing hunter and another participant insert their fingers into the ring-shaped skin cut from round the mouth and nose of the animal and, imitating the bear's sound, each pulls it towards himself until it snaps. During the occasion, the bear-killer is interpreted as a *por* man, and his partner as a *mōś* man (Kannisto, Liimola & Virtanen 1958: 375).

5.3. The interconnections of the bear and the "human" signs

5.3.1. An "esoteric" significance of the bear-principle?

In Ob-Ugrian culture, of all the animals it is the bear that is identified most closely with man, which is probably one of the bases of its widespread cult. Concept 8 is a projection of the human-like qualities of "forest" (= real) bears. It can be traced back to the ancient idea that man and beast are two different forms of realization of some common principle or system. Consequently, members of human and animal societies can be equal partners of one another. Concept 9 is a hyperbolized form of the former. By virtue of its superhuman powers, the bear to a certain extent dominates the human sphere, and with these features it approaches the sphere of supernatural, "spiritual" beings. Psychologically, systems based upon such concepts are usually modes of symbolizing unconscious (instinctual) factors. We may venture the hypoth-

esis that, in Ob-Ugrian culture, the bear-principle is one of the main areas of projection for the unconscious regions of the personality; which is why it appears in the same way in the natural (animal), human, and spiritual spheres. It was probably on this basis that, in the eastern, Vakh Ostyaks, the ethnic cultural "filter" allowed in the borrowed concept of the human soul's reincarnation in bear shape (concept 14 – Kulemzin 1972: 97).

5.3.2. Direct relationships between man and "forest" bear

Of these, sexual relationships have the greatest significance, in relation to both the ancestor and the offspring. Concept 15 summarizes specific instances of marriage between woman and bear. Its typical manifestation, the conflict between the bear-husband and his human brothers-in-law, is not very important in the Ob-Ugrians. It is contained in the purest form in the "inverted" bear songs – characterized by the oath motif – of the Pelym Voguls (the bear oath song is a story of the retribution for a false oath sworn on the bear). Certain Pelym songs transfer this action into the society of bears: the cub born of a human mother swears falsely by his human uncle, whereupon the latter kills the bear-father (Kannisto & Liimola 1958: 348–349, 350–353, 354–357; Kannisto, Liimola & Virtanen 1958: 334).

The logical extension of the motif of marriage between bear and man – through the totemic ancestor cult, which represents a link with both the animal kingdom and the afterworld – would lead to the person of a moiety-ancestor spirit (cf. Černecov 1974: 311). However, the bear shape of the Sacred Town Elder, of the *por* moiety, identified by Černecov, is not a "forest" bear; instead, it reflects the concept of a mythologically coded "earth" bear. See furthermore 6.2.1.1.

5.3.3. Man ⟺ bear metamorphoses

Concept 16 embraces folklore personages who, shedding their animal skin like a garment, turn into humans. Their appearance on the scene presupposes a previous "society → nature (forest)"-type switching of spheres in the narrative. The metamorphosing personages are men, who are agnate or cognate relatives of the principal hero. As relatives of the heroine of the *mōś* moiety, they show a strong affinity with legends centred on issues of moiety. They have two types: (a) solitary bear-men (Obdorsk Ostyak: Pápay 1910: 79–92; Synja Ostyak: Steinitz 1975: 80–89; 1976: 141 – "earth" bear!; an attempt at interpretation: Lükő 1965: 37) and (b) bearmen representing the strongest of several animal heroes belonging to various

species (Upper Sos′va Vogul: Munkácsi 1892–1902: 38–67; Upper Loz′va Vogul: Černecov, No. 1478, text 1). The motif of changing the garment and the other attributes (claws, teeth) is interesting because, on the evidence of my own collecting trips among the northern Ostyaks, the man → bear metamorphosis of the Sacred Town Elder guardian spirit is imagined partly along these lines (cf. 6.2.2.5.).

Concept 17 refers to instances of man → bear metamorphosis held to be real. Its typical manifestation is a myth of origin: the bear rises from the final metamorphosis of the hero who has lost his way in the forest (Konda Vogul: Kannisto & Liimola 1958: 96–98; Vasjugan Ostyak: Kulemzin & Lukina 1977: 19–20). In the northern Ob-Ugrians there are no data on it, but they know of temporary metamorphosis. With the help of the Sacred Town Elder, man can, on occasion, turn into a bear (Ostyak, of the mouth of the Kazym: Domokos 1984/II: 94–98). It is an obligatory motif of these narratives that the means of the change of sphere and form is the symbol of the forest: the tree (slipping through beneath it, sitting astride it, jumping down from it), which proves the "forest" character of the arising bears.

5.3.4. *The problem of the reincarnating female bear and the moiety ancestors:* concept 18

The moiety myth called the "Small *mōś* woman" was assigned by Černecov to the most ancient stratum of the bear folklore (1974: 289); he evaluated as a key figure the female bear featuring in it (1939: 29; 1965: 108–109; 1964: 28). Because of its associations with the moiety cults, I discuss this topic in some detail.

Černecov's narrative variant is as follows: Move (1): The *mōś* woman, by false pretences, contracts an incestuous marriage with her own brother. A son is born to them, and the latter, on learning the secret, divulges it to his father. The *mōś* man slays his sister and his son. Move (2): From the heroine's blood there grows a plant called *poriγ*. It is eaten by a female bear, which gives birth to two cubs and a human girl. She enjoins on her daughter the taboo of eating bear's flesh. The three bears are killed by hunters, who take the girl with them. She observes the rules at the feast, and as a result her ursine relatives turn into constellations and ascend to the sky. In Černecov's view, the reincarnated heroine is the first representative of the *por* moiety (1965:108–109). According to Rombandeeva's interpretation of the story, out of the marriage of the reborn, *mōś* woman and the ethnically alien hunter, the son of the Town Lord, arose the *por* people (1984: 107, 110).

For the folklore analysis we need (a) a survey of the plot and motif variants; (b) an examination of the traits and functions of the heroes in other works of art comprising their persons. The result of the analysis is briefly as follows, (a) Move 1 of the "small *mōś* woman" narrative can be of two kinds: (1) the above incest between siblings (Upper Sosʹva Vogul: Kannisto & Liimola 1951: 250–263; Ob Vogul: Černecov, No. 1480, text 1; Šerkal and Little Sosʹva Ostyak: the author's collection 1980, 1982). In an atypical but interesting version, the first wife, whom the *mōś* woman destroyed by guile, is not a wooden puppet, as is ordinarily the case, but the youngest daughter of the Town Lord (Ob Vogul: the estate of Černecov, No. 1474, text 1.) (2) Without incest: the solitary *mōś* woman has to retrieve a lost garment of hers from a sky-stretching larch. She makes a mistake; she is torn apart by the wild beasts guarding the tree (Obdorsk Ostyak: Pápay 1910: 79–92; Kazym Ostyak: Rédei 1968: 64–70; Šerkal Ostyak: the author's collection, 1980). After these, Move 2 is uniform: one of the sons of the Town Lord kills the bears and receives the *mōś* woman into his house. There is, in most instances, no overt reference to their marriage, but the functions described below of the Town Lord's son leave no doubt as to this. The constellation motif appears independently of the versions of Move 1, and it may be absent in the more recent records. (b) An analysis of the epic plots comprising representatives of the *mōś* and the *por* moieties shows the following occurrence of the characters.

	mōś	*por*
woman	+	+
man	+	−

Thus we find no character under the name of *por* man! It is generally the narratives featuring the pair of female characters with the animal figures (hare and fox) that are held to be the most archaic. The ultimate aim of these is the securing of the suitable husband. It is characteristic of the *mōś – por* narratives that if the heroines figure under their moiety names, the moiety is never indicated in their male partners. The positive *mōś* woman's husband is the positive Town Lord's son; the husband of the negative *por* woman is the son of the Elder called *tōntəŋ, tantal, tōn-tōn* etc. The meaning of this name is not clear (concerning its origin see Kannisto 1908:179; for its versions see Steinitz 1976: 140). According to one of Reguly's notes, Vogul *mōś χum* '*mōś* man' is the same as *tōnt-χum* '*tōnt* man' (Munkácsi 1910: 226). On the basis of all these it is logical that the Town Lord and his sons represent the

por moiety. The Town Lord (or his appropriate son – depending on the age of the character required by the plot) is one of the most widespread figures of Ob-Ugrian folklore. His popularity is surpassed only by the World Surveyor Man = Woman's Nephew, belonging to the *mōś* moiety. He differs from the latter in that he is not an active guardian spirit: he has no sacred place, idol, preserving social group, ritual etc., thus he does not feature in the "high" mythology treating of the deeds of the children of the Sky-God. His person is known among all the present groups of the Ob-Ugrians, and presumably even among the eastern Ostyaks. Accordingly, the Ostyak (Steinitz 1976: 139) and Vogul (Kannisto, Liimola & Eiras 1982: 51) versions of his name have wide-ranging variations. The genre- and functional relationships of the person of the Town Lord: the epic cycle of the *mōś–por* moiety ancestors is the most archaic – here, featuring in a polarity with the hero showing the *tōnt* element in his name, his son is the positive partner of the *mōś* woman. In the "Small *mōś* woman" narrative, discussed earlier, the son of the Town Lord is a bear-killing hero with no opposite; yet, here too he is the husband of the *mōś* woman. In what follows, we see three lines of development.

Line 1: as the second member of the 'Town Lord (Town Lord's son') – *tōnt* Elder (*tōnt* Elder's son)' opposition, the mythical World Surveyor Man = Nephew of the Woman appears, finally supplanting from the folklore the *tōnt* hero. In the meantime, the Town Lord (his son) is reevaluated into someone negative. In the narratives reflecting the transition, the opposition in moiety and in evaluation between him and the characters bearing the adjectives *tōnt*, *por* – characters that remain as relics of the old conditions – is resolved because of the new, still more positive principal hero. A case in point among the myths is the narrative of the type "The World Surveyor Man or Woman's Nephew's Descent to the Lower World", known from the northern Voguls and Ostyaks and the southern Ostyaks (Munkácsi 1982: 294–310; Černecov 1935: 62–68; Rédei 1968: 74–83; Karjalainen & Vértes 1975: 163–172). In this shamanistic story, the main hero, going after a person beckoning him to follow, reaches the lower or underwater world. After passing the tests, he wins the daughter of the Master of the World, and brings her up to the earth. The Town Lord's son repeats the journey after him, but in the wrong way; he wins a woman with negative characteristics and perishes on the earth. The neological northern Ostyak version (Rédei 1968: 74–83) describes the latter woman as a *por* woman. This is probably a secondary infiltration into the narrative of the *por* woman, as the independent negative female representative of the nether world. In this historical layer, the Town Lord has already lost his original identity.

A similar transformation can be observed, for instance, in the parallel featuring in a mythological folktale of the Obdorsk Ostyaks of the Town Lord and the *tandal* Elder, as adversaries of the main hero, that is, as allies of the *mēŋk* girls, likewise adversaries (Pápay 1910: 51–78). In the latest layer, the "Nephew of the Woman" folktale cycle, the Town Lord (his son) is unequivocally the negative opposite to the principal hero.

Line 2 treats of the Town Lord's – and his son's – special relationship to the bear, also showing itself in the "Small *mōś* woman" narrative. It should be noted that in bear folklore the openly expressed opposition of the two moiety heroes is not typical. Its purest manifestation is the late Sos′va Vogul song called "The Bear Song of the Woman's Nephew" (Kannisto & Liimola 1958: 186–192). Here the bear is killed by the main hero who is competing with the two sons of the Town Lord. The latter run away from the bear. In the bear songs – in contrast with the World Surveyor Man, who always hunts successfully – the Town Lord and his sons are assigned two kinds of roles. Without any difficulty, they kill the bear of heavenly origin, which breaks the laws, and they stage a feast according to the ritual. This is particularly typical among the Voguls of the Upper Sos′va (Munkácsi 1893: 59–108; Černecov's estate, No. 1468, text 27; No. 1469, text 3). In the rest of the cases it is the bear that prevails. In its most easily interpretable type, the bear, even after it has been killed, obtains revenge on the heroes who have broken the ordinances of his cult. This narrative is substantiated with data from the northern Voguls and Ostyaks (cf. 5.2.2.2.). More difficult to interpret are the songs where the bear attacks the Town Lord, who is saved by a hero impossible to identify on the basis of his name (e.g. Pelym Vogul: Kannisto & Liimola 1958: 240–243, 244–249). In the above respects, the Town Lord and his sons play the role of authenticating, as it were, the prescriptions of the bear cult. According to my own observations, their affinity with bear folklore – especially among the Ostyaks – is so great that, as relatives of the principal hero, they can even receive the insignificant, ancillary roles of the legend-like songs. It is also of some interest that the nickname of the bear in Vogul songs is "the (tailless) dog of the Town Lord" (Kannisto, Liimola & Virtanen 1958: 335). Line 3 of the folklore roles of the Town Lord, his occurrence in heroic epics and legends, is negligible from the standpoint of our topic.

Avdeev considered the person of the Town Lord (1936a: 123) – as did Černecov the hunters of the "Small *mōś* woman" narrative (1964: 28) – to be a representative of the *mōś* moiety on the grounds that this moiety did not have the bear as its ancestor and the totemistic taboos could not apply to it. The Ob-Ugrians of today do not identify the Town Lord with any

particular cult personage, though the trend for such a conception of folklore heroes is so strong that they are apt to interpret even the Russian folktales as guardian spirit legends. Secondarily, they sometimes identify it with the guardian spirits residing in the settlements of the regional cult centres (later administrative centres) – called, in everyday language, simply "Towns". The most intriguing thing that has ever been said about the Town Lord comes from Kannisto's Sos′va Vogul informant. According to the commentary on one of the most widely popular folktales on The Nephew of the Woman (= son of the *masmas* woman), the Town Lord is none other than the Sacred Town Elder – though another informant denied this (Kannisto & Liimola 1956: 210). The fact of the matter is that if we project the opposition of the World Surveyor Man and the Sacred Town Elder – an opposition possible to identify but hard to substantiate in the dual social organization and in the ideology – (on the basis of Černecov, in the greatest detail, see Haekel 1946) onto the folktales of the Woman's Nephew and the Town Lord, we indeed arrive at that same result. In cultic life, however, the Sacred Town Elder is a personage with formidable power. No wonder, then, that the folklore works created in the wake of the dominance of the World Surveyor Man show a reluctance to identify the negative Town Lord with him.

Černecov's theory does not seem plausible for two additional reasons. First, the connection between the Vogul plant name *poriɣ* 'Heracleum sibiricum' and the moiety name *por* cannot be proved. Secondly, the name of the constellation arising out of the bears is given only in the Obdorsk Ostyak text – in a form that can be traced back to the meaning "the *mōś* woman's home folks" (Pápay 1910: 91); – which again does not refer to the *por* moiety. Having said that, it is possible that in the cult centre of the Sacred Town Elder, the village of Vežakary, the "Small *mōś* woman" narrative was interpreted as the myth of a female bear ancestor and the *por* moiety. In the moiety respect, however, it is more likely to portray the Town Lord ancestor son's bear hunt and first lawful marriage. Moreover, somewhere among the historical layers of the bear cult there is, indeed, a "female" sign present. To prove this, the four-day initial phase (four is a female number) of the periodic feasts of the Sacred Town Elder and the songs of the female bear lowered from the sky are usually cited (Černecov 1939: 40; Munkácsi & Kálmán 1952: 95).

5.4. The relationships of the bear and the "hero" sign

The bear shares many of the traits of the Ob-Ugrian ideal of the hero: it has physical strength and a placid (indeed, passive), benign, brave, but patently

undocile nature, which at a certain point can flare up in uncontrollable aggression. The bear has invariably played an important role in Ob-Ugrian culture, thus it may have been influenced by the cults of two types of heroes. According to historical criteria, the worship (transmitted through the cult of the dead and of the ancestors) of the early, tribal and moiety sacral leaders and of the later war lords of the age of the principality can be assumed. That is crossed with the categories of the mythical god-son heroes, as defined according to the ideological code, and the later guardian spirit heroes. Among the northern groups, the majority of the mythical personages were reclassified among the guardian spirits bound to particular geographical locations and social groups, which were covered with a uniform gloss by the hero cult of the age of the principality. In view of the similar features of the guardian spirit cult and the bear cult, it is little wonder that there is an absolute cross section of ideas attaching to the "bear" concept that display analogies of the heroic traits and epic motifs. We can mention as an example the abuse and scaring of the children playing in the village square, and the obtaining of information from them as to the identity of the hero, which is present in both the heroic songs of the vendetta type and the myths concerning the origin of the bear, where one of the parents is left unknown.

In our case, the criterion of the "hero" sign is a genuine feat of arms or culture-hero's exploit. Thus we can isolate those personages described with the adjective "hero" (Vogul *ōtər*, Šerkal Ostyak *urt*) who bear this name not by virtue of their function, but to convey that they date from prior to the present human era. Bear folklore shows two types of "hero" bears.

5.4.1. *Culture-hero bear:* concept 20

Substantiated with data mostly in paraphrases, in association with bears representing various conceptions. It was through the agency of a bear that mankind obtained fire, the how, and the domestic reindeer (Munkácsi & Kálmán 1952: 22–23; Kőhalmi 1981: 136 etc.).

The fire-obtaining bear of the Vogul world of beliefs is mentioned by Gondatti (1886b: 75). It is discussed in greater detail by Infantev: the Sky-God gives fire and a bow to his son, about to be lowered to the earth, so that he may provide for himself. At the same time, he invests him with the office of judge. The bear, in his presumption, unleashes great havoc on the beasts of the forest, until the youngest of seven brothers defeats him, taking away from him the cultural goods (1910: 76–79). Kharuzin (1898, lib. 4, 3) and Pavlovskij (1907: 181) interpret on a totemistic basis the civilizational act of the "sky" mediator bear.

The reindeer originate from a folklore person turned into an "earth"- or "underworld"-signed bear. In one variant of the "Hare (*mōś*) woman and the Fox (*por*) woman" type narrative, it is the *mōś* woman's younger brother – who, having sunk in the marsh, married there and turned into a bear – presents them to his sister as a dower (Synja Ostyak: Steinitz 1975: 80–89) – cf. 5.3.3.

The overtly culture-hero-type activity of the bear is weakly expressed in the Ob-Ugrians. That is partly to be explained by the fact that this function was absorbed by the cult of guardian spirits with a bear reference. If we looked at the civilizational acts of the Pelym God, who may have the bear as his animal form, and the Sacred Town Elder, it would turn out that half the world was furnished by the bear.

5.4.2. *Mythical god-son "hero" bear:* concept 21

It is invariably bound to the person of the "lower"-signed "boy who has gone into the forest II", with a maternal dominance; it can be demonstrated from the "creation of the world"- type bear songs of the Voguls with a southeastern culture (cf. 5.1.2.1, 5.2.2.1.).

The relevant episodes of the narratives: (1) having appropriated the world order, the seven god's sons arrive at the lake of the country of the dead, on which 7 loons/small divers are swimming. The eldest boy warns his brothers not to shoot before he has shot. The youngest does not listen to him; it is the fleeing birds wounded by his arrow that spread the diseases on the earth. The eldest brother grows incensed against his brother. (2) Returning home, they get drunk on beer. Awaking from his sleep, the eldest boy goes mad; he gnaws asunder his armour and his weapons and, turning them into the body-parts of a bear, spits them onto himself. He goes into the forest as a bear (Upper Sosʹva Vogul: Munkácsi 1892–1902: 77–99). In the more complete Lozʹva version, the boy turning into a bear displays even more heroic signs. Returning home to their castle after Episode 1, he cannot get drunk from his mother's beer; yet, he does fall into a trance from the fly agaric received from his wife. He is called to repulse an enemy attack; he mounts his horse and, with a frenzied brain, he hacks and hews the enemy. He cannot be pacified even after his victory. He gnaws his armour into bits etc. and goes into the forest, saying he has found no worthy adversary among men (ibid.: 100–127). This latter is the "most heroic" of all the bears.

The traits of these heroes originate from the later period. Their primary heroic task is to combat the powers from underneath, to defend mankind

against disease and death, which the annihilation of the birds might have represented.

5.4.3. *Guardian spirit/war lord bears:* concept 22

This category includes the heroic epics of the guardian spirits that have the bear as their animal figure (cf. 5.5.4.). In fact, it is from here that their ursine character can be substantiated. They would appear to be "forest" bears, rather than anything else. They have two kinds of occurrence.

The "pure" type is represented by the Sygva Vogul war-god of Munkes. According to one of the heroic songs about him, he slips through a bent tree and turns into a bear, so as to escape the attention of his adversaries. Still, his bow, sticking out, betrays him – but he defeats them all the same (Sygva Ostyak: Pápay 1905b: 3–68). The other version was formulated later: the hero puts on a suit of armour with bear's claws, so that, pursuing his enemies, he might swim across a lake (Sos′va Vogul: Munkácsi 1892: 180–203).

The mixed – and therefore uncertain – type occurs in the heroic epics of mainly the southern groups. Here, to solve their tasks, the heroes frequently perform a series of metamorphoses into animals, leaving the most significant deed to the bear form. We could regard this as a simple folklore motif, were it not for the fact that there are three epic works binding it to a single personage – i.e. the Lower Konda Vogul war lord of Nakhrači (Munkácsi 1892: 222–234; Černecov 1935: 128–137; Vértes 1975: 140–147). Thus this hero too enters the line of guardian spirits with strong associations with the bear.

5.5. The relationships of the bear and the "spirit" signs

Cultic beings with a protective function which possess "spirit" signs (idols) can be assumed to have individual, shamanistic, domestic/familial, village, lineage and group, macroterritorial, moiety, and all-ethnic categories. In what follows, we shall examine the relevant concepts of the bear, in the order of their hierarchy.

5.5.1. *Individual cult-being*

It is difficult to identify, because of the individual interpretations of the bear cult and the variety of the individual cult objects. I encountered its purest

form in a concept of the "forest" bear resembling the individual totem. A male inhabitant of the Šerkal Ostyak Muligort could not hunt bears because, many years before, his father had prayed for his birth to a mummified bear-cub found in the forest.

5.5.2. *Domestic/familial protector:* concept 23

Domestic idols are kept in boxes in the sacred corner or in the loft. We have data from various places on this kind of occurrence of bear figures among the casts of sphere-representing animals (eastern Ostyak: Karjalainen 1922: 25; possibly Obdorsk Ostyak: Castrén 1860: 189; etc.).

Recently we have a growing number of reports showing that the representative parts of the bear are kept as family cult objects. The bear's skull gives protection against the beings of the world below (Vakh and Vasjugan Ostyak: Kulemzin 1984: 84). During my collecting trip in the field in 1982, in Vanzevat, of the Ostyaks of the mouth of the Kazym, I encountered bear-cub's hides which, curled up in the posture of embryos and wrapped up in cloth, were kept in idol's boxes in the loft. Their function was to ensure the health and good luck of the household. We have references to this kind of thing, as practised by the northern Voguls, from Gemuev, who also sets forth the rituals to be performed in the case of illness (1986: 24). All of which seems to point to a "lower" bear protecting against spirits of sickness from the underworld. Their relationship with the community guardian spirits has not been explored.

5.5.3. *Shaman helping spirit:* concept 24

We have very few and inaccurate data on it in the literature. It is most characteristic in the marginal eastern Ostyak groups. The shamans use a special bear-shaped spirit for their voyage to the nether regions (Vasjugan Ostyak: Karjalainen 1927: 282), and they likewise use a spirit having the form of a bear to frighten off the malignant souls of the dead when retrieving the soul of a sick person (Karjalainen 1921: 84). This, as well as the bearlike attributes identified by Kulemzin in the dress of the shamans of Vakh and Aleksandrovo Ostyaks (1976: 78), might be attributed to the influence of the eastern neighbouring peoples.

In the north, there are fewer data amenable to evaluation, especially because it is not clear what category (individual or general shaman helping spirit, community guardian spirit) bear-spirits belong in. It is an interesting

piece of information that, when healing a person who had been bewitched, the contest between two shamans was decided by the battle of their spirits, appearing in the shape of respectively a moose and a bear (northern Vogul: Munkácsi 1892: 375). The best-known data comes from Karjalainen: the shaman appeals to a bear-shaped spirit to save the soul of the sick person (1921: 73, 84; 1927: 283–284 – cf. 3.2, 6.2.2.6.). As the above too all seem to be "lower" bears, we shall, in what follows, attempt to define the identity of the latter spirit.

5.5.4. Community guardian spirits whose animal form is that of the bear: concept 25

The significance and interrelationships of their system require a more detailed discussion. The similar features of the guardian spirit cult and the bear cult have been noted by many, especially by those who conceived of them on the common ideological basis of the totemistic ancestor cult. Very briefly, picking out just the main points and without bibliographical references, we can mention the following features. (1) Terminological identification: calling the living bear a divine being and the dead bear a spirit. (2) The conception of the guardian spirit and the bear as alternatively identical cult-beings in the literature: the worship of animals as idols in historical reports; the veneration of the animal-(bear-)shaped manifestations and portrayals of spirits in the later monographic literature. (3) the ideologizing of the identification on the basis of the cult of the dead and the ancestor cult: the worship of the totemic animal ancestor and later of a human ancestor who was a leading personality, and the merging of these layers. A more distant analogy of the presentation of the bear (and the horse) as sacrificial animals to the spirit-ancestors and to the deceased at the funeral feast, in Witsen's description. (4) Attributes and behavioural norms characteristic of the "sacral" category in the case of the guardian spirits and the bear: place of safekeeping, metal ornaments, textiles, animal statuettes, with the purpose of obtaining, by magic, fertility and hunting spoils; the forms of making obeisance, procedures of purification, taboos prescribed for women, rules of eating, the mode of taking out. (5) Community festivals containing identical elements. Those elements of the periodic feasts of the guardian spirits (an enumeration of the Russian descriptions: Sokolova 1983: 108–110) that are identical with the bear feast: epic songs, theatricals and dancing with masks, competitive games; the giving of metal ornaments and coins, the offering of food and animal sacrifice; fertility and good-luck rituals etc. (6) The "progress" of idols and bears killed, their celebration in several villages along the way. (7) The

mutual exchange of places of the respective festivals of the bear and the guardian spirit; local idols carried in for the bear feast, the invocation by song of guardian spirits personified by actors wearing costumes and their dance bringing prosperity at the bear feast, in recent descriptions. (8) The mutual exchange of places of the material expressions of the cult: bear's skins and skulls, the accessories of the bear feast stored in the sacred places of the guardian spirits; the textiles, furs, and boxes pertaining to the guardian spirits and used in the bear feast house; the garments and other attributes of idols on the performers. (9) In the folklore, creation myths connected with the guardian spirits showing motifs of the heavenly origin of the bear: how he is raised by the Sky-God, how he longs to be on the earth, how he is lowered in a cradle by a chain on the earth to perform a special task. The tradition of the mythical godsons may contain even more homologies, e.g. a Sos′va Vogul story of the World Surveyor Man, which is almost a paraphrase of the "celestial" bear's myth of origin (Kannisto & Liimola 1955: 97–108) or the Vogul Lord of Disease myth, singled out as a parallel by Munkácsi too (1892–1902, CD–CDI). (10) perhaps: the mention by Pallas of an idol-oath, similar to the bear-oath.

The correspondences in the older sources tend to point in the direction of the guardian spirits (e.g. the sacrificing of a bear/skin to the idol, bear feasts held in its sacred place); more recently, it is the other way round. It would be a fair assumption that earlier the two cults were nearer to each other and, after the decline of the "heroic age", many of the features that had disappeared from the rituals of the guardian spirits were preserved in the bear feast. The social conditioning of cults, their moiety-, lineage- and group-bound features faded considerably. After this aperçu, it does not come as a surprise that the periodic festivals of the Sacred Town Elder whose animal form is that of the bear show the features of the later sporadic[5] bear feasts.

In trying to define the bearlike guardian spirits one is hampered by the fact that only with regard to their cult centres do we have dependable data; concerning their social-organizational aspects, we have less evidence to go on. The impact of migrations and cultural changes frequently renders the original characteristics of the specific spirits unrecognizable. There are data on the use of the bear image as tamga (property label) in the 17th century, on the Middle Sos′va, at the Ob, in the Volost′ of Koda, and near the Demjanka (Simčenko 1965: 170). Sokolova treated in detail the bear references, which

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[5] "Sporadic bear feast" is a term applied by Černecov to describe the 1- to 10-day feast of the bear killed during the hunt. It is contradistinguished with the "periodic bear feast", by which we understand the festivals of the Sacred Town Elder guardian spirit, held at seven-year intervals and lasting for several months in Vežakary.

crop up as the names of particular social units or as cultic beings in virtually all the macrogroups (1983: 112–115, 128–133), and which, in her opinion, are connected with the moiety system or, more exactly, with the *por* moiety (ibid. 138–143).

The connections of the guardian spirits and the bear appear in each case with a different quality and quantity. In the north, they can be observed in four guardian spirits.

5.5.4.1. The Pelym God

His relationship to the bear is as difficult to interpret as his own person is complex. He is one of the macro-territorial spirits of the highest order. Being the eldest son of the Sky-God, his person is also an instrument of mythological modelling, especially in the southwest. Hence his traits cannot be projected directly onto the social sphere. Outside his central, Pelym Vogul area, his cult has two kinds of irradiations (for more detail see Munkácsi 1892–1902: 259–260; 1910: 13). (a) In the southwest, among the Voguls of the Vaglja, Loz′va, Tapsuj, Upper Konda, he is the highest-ranking god's son. (b) He is worshipped by all the northern Ob-Ugrians, but only as one subordinated to the World Surveyor Man (e.g. Gondatti 1886a: 62), and sometimes even to the lower-ranking guardian spirits, e.g. the war god of Munkes, of the Voguls of the Sygva (Rombandeeva 1984: 104). Its seat was changed several times even in the recent past (Kannisto, Liimola & Virtanen 1958: 118). Černecov classes the Pelym God with the *por* moiety (1939: 24). For a reconstruction of the breakdown by moiety of the Voguls of Pelym see Sokolova 1983: 88–89. In a communication by Munkácsi from the Upper Sos′va – which is the first authentic vernacular utterance revealing that the guardian spirits are also kept in evidence according to moiety (!) – we find that the Pelym God is called "a god of the raw flesh kind" (Munkácsi & Kálmán 1952: 282–283). His famous sacred birch and white dress refer to the *mōś* moiety (Munkácsi 1910: 03–07).

The connection of the Pelym God with the bear can be demonstrated only from largely sporadic motifs, which, however, confirm each other. (1) In the Sos′va Vogul (Kannisto & Liimola 1958: 138–149) and Kazym Ostyak (Pápay 1905b: 248–259) song of the bear's origin, he is the one who nurtures and kills the bear. The Vogul version begins as a first-person-singular song of the Pelym God, to whom it ascribes features of the kind that the Ostyak version ascribes to the bear (cf. 5.2.2.3.). (2) In the Upper Sos′va Vogul mythology, influenced by the southwestern culture, the Pelym God – the

world-ordering hero – is born of the plant called *poriɣ*, the same plant that features in the story of the moiety's reincarnating female bear (cf. 5.3.4.) (Munkácsi 1892–1902:33–37; Černecov 1939: 24). (3) Kannisto comes up with the surprising communication that the Pelym God walks about in likeness of a small diver (1958:119); in the bear too there is a demonstrable association with that bird and with the lord of the nether regions as well (cf. 5.1.2.1. and 5.1.2.2.). (4) In the southwestern bear songs, beginning with the creation of the world, the eldest son of the primeval mother turns into a bear (cf. 5.1.2.1.). Motifs 2–4 refer to a "lower"-signed bear – and to the *por* moiety (?).

5.5.4.2. The war god of Munkes

A high-ranking Sygva Vogul guardian spirit. For a description of his sacred place in the most recent literature and a reconstruction of it as a princely cult-centre see Gemuev & Sagalaev 1986: 57–78, 129–130. Černecov considers him to belong to the *por* moiety (1939: 25), with Sokolova too demonstrating that this moiety has a majority in the village of Munkes (1983: 169).

   In his person, the animal form of the bear can be demonstrated unequivocally from the following motifs. (1) In a Sygva Ostyak heroic song noted down by Reguly (Pápay 1905b: 3–68) and in a Sos′va Vogul heroic song presented by Munkácsi (1892: 180–203) he assumes ursine characteristics (cf. 5.4.3.). In Munkácsi's view, this is related not to his animal form, but to his heroic task (1910: 145–146; 1921: 646). That is refuted by the remarkable fact that, (2) as rendered by Reguly's Sygva Ostyak singer, Maksim Nikilov (= Нигилев), of the village of Khorumpaul, the principal hero of the heroic song of the Munkes god bears the name *vⁿɑs/kort-neŋ-χo āktiləm tɑrɑw/vuj-oχ-taj xoльŋ unṭər ort* 'Warlord rich-stomach-in-the-crown-of-the-head-of-the-bear / beast-picked-by-the-man-from-the-town/village' (Pápay 1905b: 14). The same singer, in the song of the bear's origin (Pápay & Fazekas 1934:106–116 – cf. 5.1.1.), calls the *śopər* woman's son, who subsequently goes into the forest and turns into a bear, *u̯ǻš/kòr‛t-nèŋxò ăktəm tǻr/u̯i̯?-ŏχ tȧi xolàŋ òntər òrt* 'Warlord rich stomach in the crown of the head of the crane/animal (?) picked by the man from the town/village' (ibid. 107). The parallelism was noticed by Fazekas too (ibid. 4). The bear ~ crane reinterpretation originates from Pápay, and it seems more correct. Thus the singer must have somehow identified the war god of Munkes and the first bear! In this guardian spirit it is not possible to demonstrate the bear-killing function, present in the ones discussed earlier on.

5.5.4.3. Elder of the Town of Jeli?

It was in the neighbourhood of the aforesaid locality (Vog. *jali ūs*, Ost. *jali wǝš*, Rus. Люликарские) that the Voguls of the Lower Sos′va had their famous fortress centre. Its population is described by Sokolova as having a *mōś* majority (1938: 194). Its guardian spirit is well-known in the heroic epics.

His person emerges on the basis of a single communication by Rombandeeva. In it, he essentially displays the features of the Sacred Town Elder: at the bear feasts, he is personified in bear form, and, as a physician-specialist, he cures grave illnesses (1984: 107). The two guardian spirits whose names sound similar in Vogul (*jali ūs ōjka* 'Elder of the Town of Jeli' and *jalp ūs ōjka* 'Elder of the Sacred Town') were confused by Balandin too: Ялпус ойка = старик (божок) поселка Люликар (!) mouse-shaped (1939b: 38) – which is characteristic of the Sacred Town Elder. The Ostyak heroic song of the Elder of the Town of Jeli (Reguly, Pápay & Zsirai 1944: 166–487) contains no reference to the form of a bear, but it does contain references to a war alliance with a hero from the Sygva (the provenance of Rombandeeva's data). Černecov mentions a guardian spirit with the form of a waterbird from this village (1927: 22).

Connected with the district of the Elder of the Town of Jeli – maybe, purely by accident – is the most interesting mention, from the early part of the century, of the periodic bear feasts – a mention which has so far not been given due attention. In 1913, from the village of Russujskie Jurty (*ruś-sūj pāwǝl*), of the Lower Sos′va, V. Novickij reports the following, partly on the basis of the interpretation of the Russian inhabitants of nearby Komratki (*χomrat pāɣǝl*). According to his Russian guides, the local Voguls hold regular periodic festivals in front of old bearskins. A male bear's skin must be celebrated every two years, a female's skin every four years. Novickij personally observed the feast held in Russujskie and he confirms that these feasts are not bound to some bear killed on a particular occasion, for there are two old, damaged skins on display in one of the biggest houses. On the neck of the larger one there is a metal plate to be seen, with a portrayal of a bird, a sable, and a hunting scene – presumably a permanent feature, as the bear may be regarded as the giver of good fortune in hunting. The attributes are reminiscent of the textiles and votive objects of the idols. There is mention of the calf sacrificed to the bears – with, on its back, a cloth decorated with a portrayal of the World Surveyor Man mounted on a horse – and of dances and epic songs (Novickij 1925: 16–20). The festival, in all conscience, gives

the impression of a permanent institution. In the old days, Russujskie used to belong to the district the town of Jeli.

From 1906, Kannisto reports on the sporadic bear feast of the same district of the Lower Sosʹva. The bear killed with the participation of the hunters of Ljulykary was celebrated partly in the village of Šajtanskie (*jalpəŋ ńol*) and partly in the village of Ljulykary (Kannisto, Liimola & Virtanen 1958: 350 ff.). The highly interesting data could be evaluated only on the basis of the regional variants of the bear cult, which have not been studied so far.

5.5.4.4. The Sacred Town Elder

He is the key figure among the guardian spirits that have the bear as their animal form. In the following pages, I shall try and give a more detailed description of his person.

From the above it can be assumed that the bear-shaped guardian spirits – one of whom can be supposed to feature in the south, at the Konda River too – are not isolated phenomena, but, along with their periodic cults, may, at some point in the past, have constituted an entire system!

6. The Sacred Town Elder

6.1. Moiety-ancestor (?) guardian spirit bear

He is one of the most mysterious northern Ob-Ugrian guardian spirits. In spite of his significance, he was unknown in the traditional ethnographic literature. His seat, Vežakary, is unmarked on the detailed maps of K. Pápay and B. Munkácsi, and also that of Kannisto (1969), as has been noted by Béla Kálmán (1976: 14). All that is presumably partly to be explained by the fact that the old expedition route led along the Little Ob towards Berëzovo: before Steinitz (1935), researchers did not pay much attention to the Šerkal Ostyaks and Ob Voguls of the neighbourhood. Moreover, certain taboos might also have prevented them from learning about him. To the best of my knowledge, the first identifiable mention of the Sacred Town Elder is to be found in Károly Pápay's notes of the years 1888–1889: in the region of the Ob, one of the three sons of the goddess Kalteś is *jem-vas-ige* ('Sacred Town Elder' in Ostyak), who has the form of a bear; another one is *urt* ('Lord' = World Surveyor Man) (Munkácsi 1910: 046). The next data appears in a Kazym Ostyak bear song of József Pápay's 1898–1899 expedition; here the bear killed is carried across the village of *i̯əm u̯ås tōrəm* 'Sacred Town
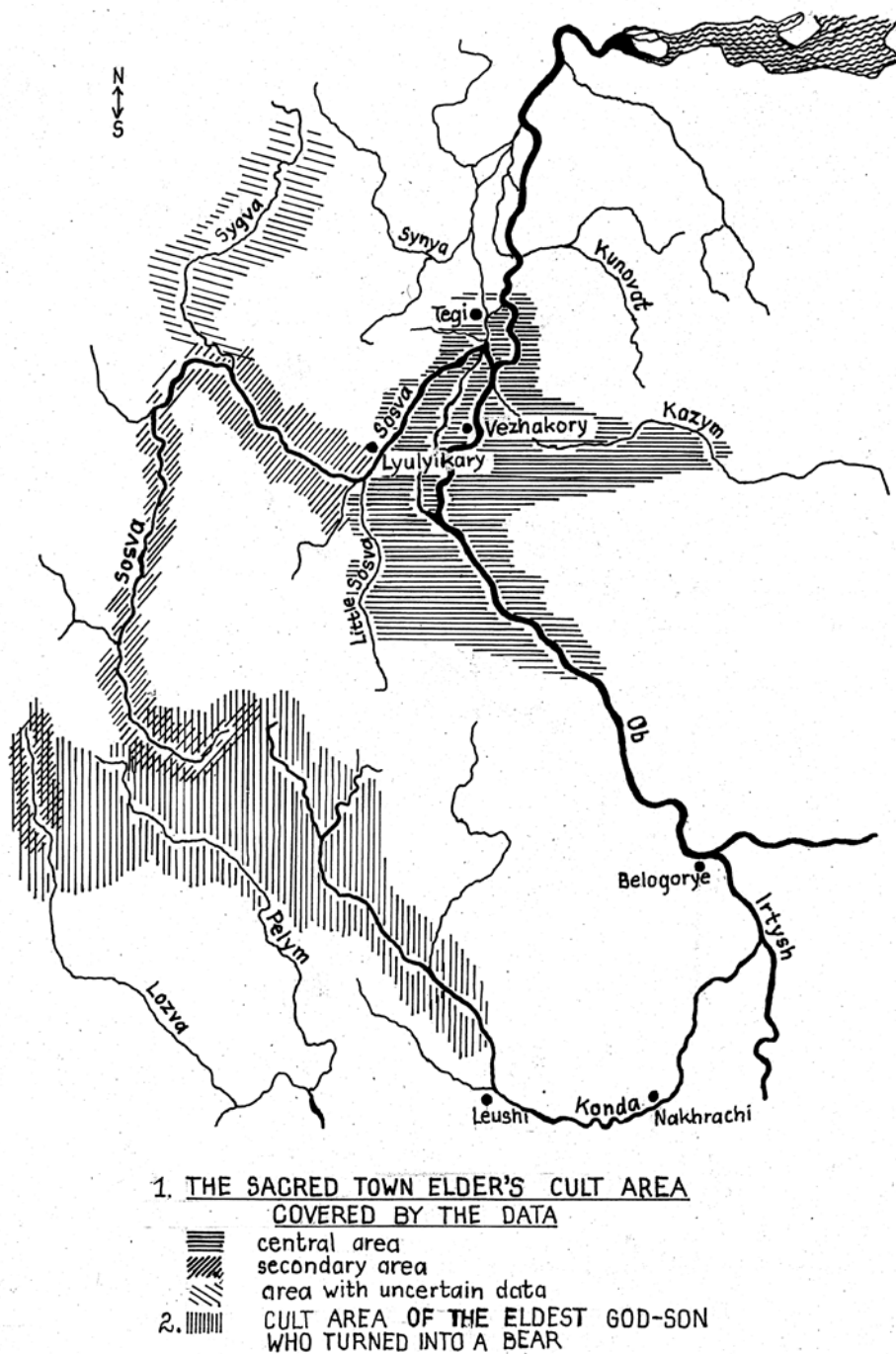
Figure 4.

god' (Pápay & Fazekas 1934: 58). Although there is a reference to Károly Pápay's data, the settlement is mistakenly identified with Belogorʹe (*i̯ēmən u̯ȧ̊š*) (ibid. 137; cf. Steinitz 1976: 287).

In the middle of the 1930s, the Sacred Town Elder was discovered almost simultaneously among the Ob Voguls by Avdeev (1936b: 27–28) and Černecov (1937: 209; 1939: 29, 36, 38 and his other works), with the evidently common information of the moiety connection. Among the Šerkal Ostyaks, the discovery was made by Steinitz (1976: 287–289; 1980: 398–399, 410), without social implications. Following in their footsteps, several Soviet researchers visited the area: Zolotarëv 1964: 227–228), Sokolova (1971: 214–216 and her other works). His person became known especially through Černecov's epoch-making works reconstructing the relationship between totemistic, moiety cults, the bear cult and the Sacred Town Elder (1939, 1947, 1965, 1971, etc. and particularly 1974). Without their impact, modern Ob-Ugrian studies would be inconceivable. (See *Figure 4.*)

6.1.1. The appellations of the Sacred Town Elder

They fall into two types. (1) Commonly used, shorter forms. According to his seat: Sacred Town Elder Vog. *jalp-us ōjka*[6] (Černecov 1939: 29), Ost. Šer. *jem-wɔs ĭkə* (Steinitz 1975: 384; 1976: 287) and the variants of these. According to his animal form: "Clawed Elder" Vog. *konsəŋ ȧś* 'Clawed Father' (Černecov 1939: 29; Kannisto, Liimola & Virtanen 1958: 147), Ost. Šer. *kŭnšəŋ ĭkə* (the author's collection, 1980).

(2) Sacral appellations, that is, periphrastic formulas used in the cultic folklore. According to the exterior of his person: "Moon/sun big-eyed ruler" Ost. Šer. *tĭ̄ləś/χătl unə sempə χɔn* (Zolotarëv 1964: 227; author's collection, 1982). According to his animal form: "Marsh/forest animal (= bear) shaped ruler" Ost. Šer. *ńurəm/unt wɔj χŏrəp χɔn* (N. I. Terëškin's communication); "March/forest animal clawed ruler" Ost. Šer. *ńurəm/unt wɔj kŭnšeŋ χɔn* (Steinitz 1975: 385). According to his function: "Girl/boy soul adding ruler" Vog. So. *āɣi/piɣ lili ōltmaŋ χōn* (Kannisto & Liimola 1951: 356); "Ruler carrying a pannier (full) of little girl's/boy's soul" Ost. Šer. *aj ewə/pŏχ ĭsəŋ χĭnt atmaŋ χɔn* (N. I. Terëškin's communication).

Variants of these appellations occur in the cultic folklore in a fairly large area: according to my data, among the Ostyaks of Nizjam, Šerkal, and the mouth of the Kazym, and the Voguls of the Ob and the Sosʹva, but

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[6] The Ob-Ugrian terms are given in a standardized phonematic transcription, from the northern dialects closest to Vežakary.

probably further away too. Their number could be increased by the still more complicated periphrases and heroic-epic appellations.

Of the appellations, the one referring to the form of the bear is the most peculiar. The motif of the pannier of souls is very interesting – it has an analogy, in the form of the "sack of souls", in the cultic folklore of the Konda Vogul Jevra (village) Lady. This female guardian spirit is held to be one of the greatest healers of her area – so much so that she is able to raise even those who have been dead for three days. According to the belief, she, riding a black horse, regularly visits Moscow, so as to bring the water of life; at such times, a gust of rain arises. She also has a role in the growing of children (Kannisto & Liimola 1951: 93–96, 402; Kannisto, Liimola & Virtanen 1958: 186). The other appellations may also occur in other high-ranking guardian spirits.

6.1.2. His seat: *Vežakary*

The remains of his earth-works and his sacred place are to be found on the high right-bank terrace of the Great Ob. For a description of the district see Sokolova 1971: 214–215. The names of the Ob Vogul settlement lying opposite: (1) in common discourse, "Sacred Town"; Vog. *jalp-ūs*, Ost. *jem-wɔs*, Zyryan *veža kar* (Steinitz 1976: 287); hence the Russian Vežakary.

(2) Its sacral appellations: "Running/going horse shaped town" Vog. *χājtne / minne luw χuriŋ ūs* (Černecov 1939: 36), Ost. Šer. *χuχəttə / măntə tow χȯrpə wɔš* (Steinitz 1975: 385). Its shorter form is "Horse town" Vog. *luw-ūs* (Kannisto & Liimola 1951: 474). As for the data of "Horse village" *ʌɔw-kȯrt*, from the Ostyaks of the mouth of the Kazym (collected by the author), it is not clear which point of the district it refers to. The form "Leaf-animal shaped town" *lūpta-ūj χuriŋ ūs*, from the Voguls of the Sosʹva (Kannisto & Liimola loc. cit.), is also documented with the explanation that there the Sacred Town Elder once killed a hero riding a horse whose patches resembled the spots of leaves. From the buried horse arose the town. According to Steinitz's informants, the name refers to the horse-like shape of the bank terrace (1976: 288).

It should be noted that there are several old settlements called "Sacred town" or something similar; for instance, Belogorʹe, near the mouth of the Irtysh – the seat of the World Surveyor Man – mentioned, in Ostyak, as *jeməŋ wɔš* (Pápay & Fazekas 1934: 137), *jem (wɔš)* (Steinitz 1976:287) or *jăm wɔš* (Rédei 1968: 7–8); along the Konda, *jam-voś* (Patkanov 1900: 114; 1891: 15) etc. It is interesting that in one of Pápay's archaic Obdorsk

Ostyak heroic songs there crops up a certain *aị laụ(i) pāzəŋ ụàs* 'mit kleinem Pferde-Zeichen versehene Stadt', which also serves as an adjective of the lady residing in it (Pápay & Erdélyi 1972: 392, 426, 436, 464 – see also Radomski 1985: 16). The town cannot be located concretely.

The Sacred Town Elder is not the only idol of Vežakary, though he is the most famous one. Belonging in this class is the Knife Elder, whose idol kindred, through his six "brothers" bearing similar names, extends as far as the Ural. For a description of his holy place see Sokolova 1971: 220–221. Located further away is the lower ranking group of idols of the "Seven Elders of the Sacred Town", and in a separate place the female idol called the Lady of the Sacred Town or Horse Village Woman (Schmidt 1984: 1221).

6.1.3. The manifestation forms of the Sacred Town Elder

The typical northern representatives of the category which, as person, is called "warlord" – Vog. *ōtər*, Ost. Šer. *urt* – and, as cult person and materially represented cult object, "guardian spirit" – Vog. *pupiɣ*, Ost. Šer. *tuŋχ*, – have two forms of manifestation: (1) dominant human, and (2) latent animal, into which he can transform himself, if the occasion calls for it. Historically, the animal form is regarded by the literature as a relic of the earlier, totemistic layer.

(1) His human manifestation forms. (a) Warrior. Under the impact of the hero cult of the age of the principality, the majority of the guardian spirits were homogenized by the general consciousness in the figure of an armour-clad and sworded war lord. In the unpublished heroic epics about him (the collections of Černecov, Terëškin, and the author), the Sacred Town Elder too appears fully armed. At the guardian spirit dances of Vežakary's periodic festivals and the sporadic bear feasts of the neighbourhood, he is personified as a man wearing a white kaftan, with a neckerchief, each hand holding an arrow (Černecov 1974: 314). In the recent past, his sword, kept in his sacred place and held in cultic veneration, was sunk in the river, to prevent it falling into alien hands (author's collection, 1982). (b) As a reflection of his higher, mythological function, he is personified, at the Šerkal Ostyak bear feast theatricals, as a man with a pannier carrying wood shavings symbolizing soul-birds (Steinitz 1980: 399). This image is referred to by one of his sacral names as well.

(2) His animal forms. (a) His well-known main form is a gigantic male bear (Avdeev 1936b: 27; Černecov 1939: 29; 1965: 107, etc.). His invocation songs, which also suggest the appearing spirit, almost everywhere mention this (as an example see Kannisto & Liimola 1951: 354–359). According

to the belief-legends about him, he can, on occasion, assume the form of a bear not only to overcome distances, but also to perform some special tasks attendant on his protective function (Černecov 1950: 119–120; Domokos 1984/II: 94–98). At the Šerkal Ostyak bear feasts, in the mythical play about the dead man's resurrection (see Steinitz 1975:400–404), his role was played in a fur coat – earlier in a bearskin (?) – put on with the hair outside (author's collection, 1982). (b) His secondary animal form, not much known in the monographic literature up until now, is the mouse. This arises from the notion of the mouse-shaped soul of the bear and is intimately related to his healing function (cf. 4.1., 6.2.2.5., 6.2.2.6.). Occasionally it also appears in the heroic epics about him (cf. 4.2.).

6.1.4. His narrower and wider social references

The concrete local genealogical group that kept his idol image and sacred place, directing his cult and periodic festivals, is called "the clan of the Sacred Town Elder", Vog. *jalp-ūs ōjka rūt*, which, according to Avdeev, should be taken to mean the inhabitants of Vežakary (1936b: 27). Data concerning the "sacral" appellation of this group can be obtained from the individual songs of the district's Ob Voguls and Šerkal Ostyaks: "Woman/man/people of the little horse end clan" – the word "end" can be taken as a diminutive suffix – Vog. *māń luw ōwəl sirəŋ nē/χum/māχum*; Ost. *aj tɔw ɔtəŋ sirəŋ ne/χu/mĭr*. With respect to the social group, Vežakary is mentioned, in the songs, under the sacral name "Land of the little horse end clan" Vog. *māń luw ōwəl sirəŋ mā*; Ost. Šer. *aj tɔw ɔtəŋ sirəŋ mĭγ* (Schmidt 1983a: 358–359). The local group consists of representatives of the Ob Vogul family name Kostin, and it belongs to the *por* moiety (Sokolova 1983: 130, 199).

Černecov emphasized that, in general, members of the *por* moiety referred to themselves as the "People of the clawed elder (= bear) moiety" Vog. *konsəŋ akit sir māχum* (1939: 23), the "People of the Sacred Town Elder" (1965: 107), calling their group the "Bear moiety" Vog. *pupiχ sir* (1939: 23).

On the basis of this, he concluded that Vežakary had been the cultic centre of the *por* moiety. Historically, however, neither the place nor the Ob, from various western groups – including those of the Pelym region – settled in this district.

6.1.5. The Sacred Town Elder's ties of kindred

As with the generality of mythical personalities with a long historical development, these are multilayered and multi-meaning in character. Given

the lack of data regarding the "high mythology" of his area, we are deprived of the principal source.

(1) "High-mythological" agnatic kinship: it shapes as a function of the conception of the goddess Kalteś. (a) Where Kalteś is held to be the wife of the Sky-God, roughly the following scheme could be reconstructed in the case of the Voguls, according to Černecov (1939: 36):

Kalteś (earth)	*Numi tōrəm* (sky)
female rabbit, goose	female bear, bear
totem of primary clan	totem of primary clan
mir-susne-χum (Vogul name)	*jem-wōš-ōjka* (Ostyak name)
('World Surveyor Man')	('Sacred Town Elder')
goose	bear
totem of the *mōś* moiety	totem of the *por* moiety

NB. Černecov has no proof whatsoever of his hypothesis – often quoted in the Soviet literature – that the Sky-God once had the form of a bear. The sun/moon analogies, showing the periodicity of summer/winter, as well as the astral connections, pertain to a different complex of ideas.

Károly Pápay's Ob Ostyak data too present the Sacred Town Elder as the son of the goddess Kalteś (Munkácsi 1910: 046). The two brothers, the World Surveyor Man and the Sacred Town Elder, arising from this lineage, appear significant particularly from the standpoint of shamanism; in respect of moiety, the pair is secondary and later than the myth of the zoomorphic *mōś/por* female ancestors (Tolstov 1948: 296). Among the Ostyaks of the mouth of the Kazym, the Kalteś mother motif serves, in some places, to invert the mediational axis of the bear: the mother character in the "Boy gone into the forest I." narrative may be interpreted as Kalteś, with the boy character interpreted as the Sacred Town Elder (author's collection, Vanzevat, 1982) – cf. 5.1.1.

(b) Where Kalteś belongs to the older generation of the supreme deities, but is not the wife of the Sky-God, the Sacred Town Elder is considered to be her brother and the World Surveyor Man, her nephew. This is characteristic of the "Woman's Nephew" folktales of the neighbouring Voguls and Šerkal Ostyaks (Steinitz 1975: 200–302, 302–308; 1976: 257) and is late in origin.

(c) Where Kalteś is kept in evidence in her position as guardian spirit, she ranks among the children of the Sky-God, as the sister of the Sacred Town Elder and the World Surveyor Man. Such a secondary genealogy is displayed by the only creation myth recorded from the Šerkal Ostyaks (author's collection, 1982).

(2) Other kinship. Among the neighbouring groups, he is mentioned as "the man who has got himself many wives"; yet, his wives of various origins crop up only as ancillary characters in the local legends. According to the most interesting data, he also married the daughter of the Vanzevat Elder = Lord of the Nether Regions (author's collection, Tugijany, 1980). His nephew, known further afield as well, is the "Little Lord of the Sacred Town" Vog. *jalp-ūs māń ōtər*, Ost. Šer. *jem-wɔš aj urt* (Kannisto & Liimola 1955: 52–59, 693; Kannisto, Liimola & Virtanen 1950: 211; Steinitz 1980: 398). The Sacred Town Elder is so popular in Šerkal Ostyak epics that he is sometimes regarded as the uncle of other, lower-ranking guardian spirits, e.g. the Lord of Nazym (Steinitz 1975: 244–263; 1976: 245).

In József Pápay's collection there is a northern Ostyak heroic song which might possibly be presumed to refer to the seat and ties of kindred of the Sacred Town Elder. Notably, in the "Song of the Elder of Tegi", noted down from Grigorij Torykoptyn, of the village of *às-kòr′t* (Pápay & Erdélyi 1972: 12–163), the main hero's bride-to-be is the daughter of a certain "Horse end man" *låu̯ ā̆ləŋ-χò*, who has seven warlord brothers. There is mention, too, of his castle and brook, similarly named (Radomski 1985: 119. We get a description of the journey there from the village of Tegi: towards the south, they first proceed along the Little Ob and then, touching a section of the Sos′va (roughly towards Berëzovo? – É. Sch.), they once again reach the Ob. They row along it until they reach the source, and, crossing the sea there, they find the town (op. cit. 48–50, 72–80). The extreme southern location is an exaggeration, but the first half of the voyage may correspond to the journey to Vežakary, where, beside the castle hill, there is indeed a brook entering the Ob. The Elder of Tegi may be a relative of the Sacred Town Elder; however, there are no data on the degree of relationship. It is clearly no mere accident that the periodic festivals of the latter were customarily held alternately in Vežakary and in Tegi. The Elder of Tegi is a guardian spirit whose primary animal form is that of the fox and secondary animal form is that of the dog. Sokolova describes the village as being of mixed moiety (1983: 197).

The members of the Sacred Town Elder's household impersonated at the Šerkal Ostyak bear feasts include his tax-collecting clowns (Steinitz 1975: 389–396), his two female servants playing on the Jew's harp (author's collection, 1982) and, among the Voguls of the Sos′va, his old serving woman (Kannisto & Liimola 1959: 285). The *mēŋk*s featuring at the periodic feasts of Vežakary likewise belong to his folks.

6.1.6. The Sacred Town Elder's system of rites

Theoretically, it should come after a description of the functions of the spirit, but, as these have been explored to a lesser degree, I discuss it first. It can be assumed to have several types.

(1) General rites: occasional sacrifices of food/animals, with prayer, textile and metal votive objects, in the sacred place or elsewhere. Based on the guardian spirits' usual functions of protecting health, bringing hunters a good bag and fishermen a good haul, and averting danger, they clearly do not differ much from the similar rituals of the other spirits. In this respect, the neighbouring Ob Ugrians describe the Sacred Town Elder as "good-hearted", which suggests that the rituals of high-ranking spirits worshipped in a wide circle contain fewer special rules and, according to belief, they bring surer results than those of certain local spirits.

(2) Periodic feast (cf. 5.5.). Its special feature is that, because of the bear-shaped animal form of the spirit, it is reminiscent of a gigantic bear feast. The most detailed description of it comes from Černecov (1965: 108–110). Accordingly, Vežakary and Tegi – the Ostyak village on the bank of the Little Ob, lying north of Berëzovo – took seven-year turns in hosting the feast, which lasted from the full moon in December almost until the vernal equinox. The proceedings were divided into four sections. The first, which took place during four nights (the number prescribed for the female bear!), contained epic songs, the "Small *mōś* woman" myth – interpreted as the origin of the *por* moiety – (cf. 5.3.4.), sword-dances, guardian spirit dances, and other men's and women's dances. The second stage, held after 5 to 7 days throughout January and February, consisted – depending on the number of participants arriving there – mainly of occasional performances of bear feast plays. The third stage embraced the seven nights preceding the new moon in March and had a similar programme. The final stage, after a slight break, lasted quite until the full moon, and it involved a greater amount of frightening mummery than the ordinary bear feasts. Finally, performers wearing masks raised in height and covered with horse-tail hair and impersonating *mēŋk*s took with them the diminutive wooden figures of a woman and a man – for scapegoats, as it were – to the secret sacred place beyond the river and "executed" them. The festivals were attended by large numbers of Voguls and Ostyaks arriving from relatively distant areas.

Among the characteristics of the moiety, Černecov shows how certain parts of the sacral epics and ritual are kept secret, adducing, as an example, precisely the sacred dances of the feasts of Vežakary (1965: 108). Zolotarëv

(1964: 228), who followed in the footsteps of Černecov during his collecting trip, did not obtain such information – but then, he had not been received by the Voguls as one of them. From a one-time "mistress" of the festivals and from some frequent participants in them I managed to learn this much, that certain prohibitions covered the performance and watching of the sacred songs and dances of the first portion. These prohibitions again came into force in the final portion, although most participants tried to be present precisely on these days. Certain of the spirit dances called "high dance" Ost. Kaz. *kărəś jak* could be performed only by locals. In Vežakary too there were certain songs that it was desirable to sing in Ostyak, while in Tegi the greater part of the festival was conducted in Ostyak. Those questioned are reluctant to give information on aspects to do with moiety. According to Černecov, the local organizers of the festivals too were approved on the basis of rules relating to age and status (loc. cit.). The most interesting data in my field material is that originally the festivals would have been held in seven villages; as, indeed, also in the case of the brother-spirits, seated in various places, seven is the typical number. From Tegi, though it lay along the way and was well-known, there is no reference in the literature to similar feasts. The people of that place abandoned the custom before 1945.

NB. The village of Tegi too raises some interesting points. Near Vežakary there was a settlement called Tegi in Ostyak, *som-pāɣəl* in Vogul, and mentioned, in Russian, under the name Тегинския (юрты) or Заимка (Kálmán 1976: 14). According to those questioned, the periodic feasts took place in the Tegi beyond Berëzovo, and the cause of the identity of the two village names is not known.

The village of Vežakary is, by now, uninhabited. In 1982, the community house serving as the venue of the celebrations was, though damaged, still standing. From the middle of the 1960s onwards, the holding of the periodic festivals has been coming up against insoluble difficulties. Quite a few of the male inhabitants of the district over 50 are able to perform the simple dances, plays and short songs, but with the death of the older generation the people who possess knowledge of the epic songs and special rituals are finally disappearing.

Starting from the types of the dances, Černecov reconstructs four historical layers: periodic hunting magic aimed at animal fertility, totemistic tribal rites, totemistic moiety rites and apologetic-protective rites (Černecov 1974: 311–312). The moiety festivals of Vežakary are more archaic than the sporadic bear feast (1965: 110).

6.2. The functions of the Sacred Town Elder

They can be deduced from two images – i.e. from the later human-shaped warrior and from the earlier bear. In respect of the former, he cannot differ much from the other high-ranking guardian spirits, but his functions arising from the latter – as well as his rituals – do raise him from the ranks of the cult personages. In the analysis, we shall return to the system of bear-concepts according to the horizontal and vertical axes, from where the complex of ideas of the totem-ancestor-mediator and of the shamanistic soul-saver-mediator originates. It should be noted that, with regard to the functions, at present only regional differences can be substantiated with data – those of moiety are not covered by them. The functions of the average guardian spirit: (a) ancestor and protector of social group, (b) lord of the natural treasures of his region, hence also the sender of the hunters' good luck, (c) protector of health, (d) protector of his followers in dangerous situations.

6.2.1. Horizontal axis

6.2.1.1. Ancestor of social group? concept 26

On the basis of the theory of Avdeev (1936b: 27) and Černecov (1939: 29 etc.) – according to which the bear was the ancestor of a primary clan, and later, moiety – it would be logical to look for a "marriage partner" concept among the functions of the Sacred Town Elder (15.). But Černecov has in mind the reincarnating bear-ancestress, and the initial four-night portion of the festivals of Vežakary too suggests a female bear. As for the male bear corresponding to the animal form of the spirit, we have, for the time being, no data that would interpret it as the ancestor of human descendants. We do not know, either, whether all those belonging to the *por* moiety indeed regard the Sacred Town Elder, in particular, or the bear, in general, as their ancestor. The only thing that the reports allow us to infer is that, in the more remote groups, those of his functions connected with the vertical axis are more significant.

The thesis of moiety ancestor would be definitively proved if it turned out that the person of the Sacred Town Elder indeed historically contained the Town Lord of the folklore. That would explain the association of the "Small *mōś* woman" narrative with the *por* moiety and the bear cult (cf. 5.3.4.).

6.2.1.2. Ancestor of the bear species?

From the Ostyaks of the mouth of the Kazym we have already mentioned the trend linking the person of the Sacred Town Elder with the "Boy gone into the forest I" narrative (cf. 6.1.5.). It is characteristic of all the representatives of this type that, in contrast with the bear of celestial origin, they are of maternal dominance, "forest"- and "lower"-signed. At the end of the song they are not killed – they can multiply without hindrance. They give the impression of being not just simple ordinary members of the society of bears, but special ancestors of it, as guardian spirits are of human society. In accordance with this, when I put to the best singer of the Šerkal Ostyaks (of the Little Sos′va), Grigorij Smolin, the following question: if, in the song of origin known to him, the first bear lowered from the sky is joined by his sister, the goddess Kalteś, is the bear not the future Sacred Town Elder? – he answered me in the negative (Schmidt 1983b: 29). To be sure, the Sacred Town Elder shows the least affinity with the bear of heavenly origin, killed during its first hibernation – he is clearly a representative of the opposite type.

6.2.1.3. Lord of the bear species: concept 13

Surprisingly enough, the Sacred Town Elder seems to be the clearest-cut representative of the guardian spirits who are at once bear-shaped and bear-killers (cf. 5.2.2.3.). Both in his human and animal form, he is master of the lives of bears.

According to a belief-legend of the Ostyaks of the mouth of the Kazym, he, in human form, joins a hunter and swears a false bear oath. He forces his companion to leap down with him from a tall larch; they both turn into bears. They destroy a pack of bears which attack them because of the oath and, in the manner described above, they turn into humans once again. It was at the behest of the Sky-God that the Sacred Town Elder was obliged to reduce the numbers of the bears, which had become too numerous (Domokos 1984/II: 94–98). This notion is supported by one of Kannisto's Vogul informants of the Upper Loz′va (the Ural region!), who says that "the Sacred Town Elder is not only bear-shaped, but is also the master of bears" (Kannisto, Liimola & Virtanen 1958: 147).

Among Černecov's manuscript Ob Vogul collections, precisely from Vežakary, there is a text entitled "Song of the Sacred Town Elder's killing of a bear" (No. 1480, text 2). In it, the spirit announces that, in the human era, they will not know how to hunt bears. He prepares to set off, and, with his bare hands, he defeats a bear by taking it by the ears and beating it against

a tree. He takes the bear killed to Vežakary and establishes the ritual of the periodic festivals to be held there. After each stage of the preparation and the establishment of the festivals he repeats that the same procedure is to be followed in the human era as well (cf. 5.2.2.3.).

All of which leaves little doubt that the Sacred Town Elder, as well as being bear-shaped, is also master of the bears and their cult.

6.2.1.4. Lord of natural goods: concept 7

Černecov assumes that the fertility-magic and hunting-magic features of the bear feast partly stemmed from the unification of the reviving representatives of the various species in the image of the most powerful species – i.e. the bear; that is how we arrive at the concept of the lord of the forest. Later the bear became a moiety totem-ancestor (1974: 306–308). In the case of the Sacred Town Elder, this function coincides with the guardian spirits' general right to dispose of the natural goods of their area. We have no evidence to suggest that, in addition to the local spirits distributing the goods of the forest (and the non-personified bear of the bear feasts), his person also plays a special role in controlling the beasts of more remote areas. This role is rendered unrecognizable by the crucial predominance and significance of the functions of the vertical axis.

6.2.2. Vertical axis

Whereas on the horizontal axis the supraterrestrial totemistic ancestor concepts can be demonstrated, with associations with the bear form, the vertical axis is dominated by the role of the mediator from underneath and the form of the mouse. Put in symbolic terms, the former axis tends to embody the objective, external aspects ("society", "body"), while the latter is the carrier of the subjective, inner ("individual", "soul") aspects.

6.2.2.1. Soul-rescuer

From the Ural to the mouth of the Irtysh, the Sacred Town Elder is held to be one of the most important helpers in case of illness. The folklore text editions – whose material could not be reflected in the works of Černecov and his followers – furnish data almost exclusively on this function.

It was indicated already by Steinitz that the Šerkal Ostyaks believe his main task to be the protection of the soul of man. If someone falls gravely

ill, his soul-bird, flying away, is caught by the Sacred Town Elder, who sends it back (1976: 287). One of its purest expressions can be found in the ending of a local folktale: the Sacred Town Elder charges the goddess Kalteś to determine the life-span of the children to be born, while he himself, "protecting the soul of the little girl/boy", settles in Vežakary (1975: 302). According to his Sos′va Vogul song of invocation, he was given that office – along with the dual animal form serving the performing of it – by the Sky-God. He proudly proclaims: "I am assigned to the ruler who lengthens the soul of the little girl." In this respect, he surpasses the other spirits: "A hundred gods with wings/ with feet, however they may fly here, they cannot raise (= save) the soul of the little girl/boy" (Kannisto & Liimola 1951: 355–356). His function is also expressed in his sacral names (cf. 6.1.1.).

A more detailed textual analysis indicates that the former statements apply not just to any disease and soul. According to an explanation of the expression "with five-fingered hand of fingers I caught the three little birds of the end of the boy's braid of hair", found in the above song of invocation (ibid. 358), it refers to the "dream-birds" Vog. *ūlm ūjriśət*, of which men have five and women have four (ibid. 475). The text indicates that he again attaches the soul-birds to the braid of hair and to the dream, whereby they are restored to man. Among the Voguls of the Sos′va and the Upper Loz′va, it was precisely in cases of sleeplessness and melancholia that the Sacred Town Elder was frequently appealed to (Kannisto, Liimola & Virtanen 1958: 147). According to Černecov, the "dream-bird" Vog. *ūləm ūj* has the form of a grouse and lives outside man (Černecov 1959: 134–136).

Despite the Vogul terms, however, here we are probably dealing with another bird-shaped soul. Černecov describes the end-of-the-braid-of-hair soul-birds under the name "(breath) soul" Vog. *lili* or "small (shadow) soul". Vog. *māń is*, and he identifies them with the reincarnating clan-souls, signalling that their 5 or 4 figure refers to the number of rebirths in the case of a man and a woman, respectively (Černecov 1959: 137–139). In the neighbourhood of Vežakary, those questioned invariably responded to me as well in the categories of large and small soul, mentioning a grave psychosomatic condition and sleep disorders. According to the Šerkal Ostyaks, the "little birds" are located in the region of the heart, roughly where the collar of one's garment end (Steinitz 1976: 289). At their bear feasts, the Sacred Town Elder showers wood shavings, symbolizing souls, onto the participants, who try to catch them and hide them under their left armpits in order to protect their health (ibid. 287; 1980: 399).

In view of the syncretism of the Ob-Ugrians' concepts of the soul and the plurality of their bird-shaped manifestations, the question of the soul-

birds pertaining to the reference of the Sacred Town Elder requires more precise collecting. It should be pointed out that most shamanistic healing procedures are aimed at retrieving some soul that has removed itself, and the soul-protecting function of the high-ranking guardian spirits (e.g. the World Surveyor Man, the Pelym God etc.) is no less significant. Having said that, in the folklore of none of them is the specialization in retrieving the soul-bird expressed as graphically as in that of the Sacred Town Elder.

The "flying away" of the soul-birds may be due to several causes, such as terror, the spell of a shaman or a malign dead person, ravishment by spirits from the underworld.

6.2.2.2. Protector against malign supernatural beings

The terror occasioning the flying away of the soul-bird can arise from various causes. Its most dangerous cases are caused by low-ranking, malign supernatural beings whose power is based mainly on fear. A scene of this kind is portrayed, for instance, by a Šerkal Ostyak bear feast play of the two-faced forest spirit/*mēŋk*, signalling that on glimpsing him the soul-birds of the spectators fly in all directions (Steinitz 1975: 396–400). To combat these beings, it is not always sufficient to have an acquaintance with the warding-off tricks. The desired intervention of the upper world of spirits is frequently accomplished by the Sacred Town Elder against the following destructive agents.

(a) Endangerer: *mēŋk*. In a belief-legend of the Voguls of the Upper Loz′va, two hunters and a forest *mis* man (a human-like forest being opposite in character to the *mēŋk*) are forced to spend the night in the house of the *mēŋk*s. When the latter want to eat the hunters the *mis* man invokes their protecting spirit, the Sacred Town Elder, who saves them (Černecov's estate, No. 1477, text 2). (b) Endangerer: "creature who frightens people" Vog. *piltəptaχtən ut*, Ost. Kaz. *păʌtaptijəʌti ŏt* (a being of varied exterior, often haunting in groups). According to a belief-legend of the Ostyaks of the Kazym, these beings keep frightening with fearful sounds two hunters in the forest. One of them invokes the guardian spirits one by one, until finally the Sacred Town Elder appears, destroying the haunters. He demands a reindeer sacrifice for his help. When the other hunter fails to offer the sacrifice, he gets a man-eating ghost to destroy the ungrateful person (author's collection, Tugijany, 1982). The Voguls of the Sos′va have the notion that, at the shaman's invocation, the Sacred Town Elder appears from underneath the floor, driving out of their unclean hiding-places the "creatures who keep frightening people" (Kannisto, Liimola & Virtanen 1958: 148).

In the above instances, the Sacred Town Elder removes preventively, as it were, the supernatural danger before the soul-birds could fly away. Although other high-ranking spirits can also perform similar actions – e.g. the Elder of Tegi (Kannisto & Liimola 1951: 79–81) –, the Sacred Town Elder is a protector with a wider sphere of action, by virtue of his connection with the unclean places of the world below.

6.2.2.3. Neutralizer of illness arising from a malign spell

There is only one piece of information on it, but that comes from a fairly distant group. Among the Voguls of the Sosʹva, if the shaman concludes that the illness has been caused by a malign spell from another shaman and it seems too dangerous to send it back to the person concerned, he directs it to the Ob, to the Sacred Town Elder. The illness remains there and is neutralized (Kannisto, Liimola & Virtanen 1958: 408). Elsewhere too it is customary for the malign spell to be sent to a guardian spirit (e.g. northern Ostyak: Pápay 1905b: 272–276). On the Sosʹva there are several guardian spirits who would be suitable for this purpose – we do not know why the Sacred Town Elder is preferred, and in which villages specifically.

6.2.2.4. Protector against the dead

In the north, the range of beliefs concerning malign dead persons has two particularly popular types: (a) the aggressive living dead persons; (b) the dead person who takes the soul of the living with him/her. When faced with either, the guardian spirits can be of help.

(a) The hero of a Sosʹva Vogul belief-legend, while on travel, is forced to spend the night, as it happens, near a dead female relative of his. Attacked by the corpse, he is saved only when the Sacred Town Elder, appearing in the form of a bear, tears apart the assailant (Černecov 1959: 119–120). Among the Šerkal Ostyaks, a similar narrative was noted down by Terëškin, but there the spirit was not named. (b) If the dead person takes with him the soul of someone, it is customary to turn to a shaman. He, in turn, dispatches a guardian spirit to retrieve from the grave the object containing the soul (ibid. 118–119). The Ostyaks of the mouth of the Kazym understand that the spirit best suited for that purpose is the Sacred Town Elder because, in the form of a bear, he can dig out the corpse from its grave more easily. As an example, they related such a case.

In these stories the succession of incidents can be assumed to be more stable than the identity of the characters. Having said that, the Sacred

Town Elder acting in the form of a bear is no accident. As we shall see below, in other respects too the bear has a fairly great deal to do with graves and the dead.

6.2.2.5. *Guard of the boundary between the respective spheres of the living and the dead:* concept 27

In the northern Ob-Ugrian belief-world, the number of days that a person can live is determined at his birth by the goddess Kalteś, who notches it on a tally or writes it in her sacred book. She does not change her decision later on. Due to various causes (malign spell, violation of the sacred laws either through his own ignorance or that of relative of his or perhaps through selfishness etc.), a person can live less than the days allotted to him, but no more. The destructive ambition of the Lord of Disease – who is chiefly responsible for death – and of his host of demons from underneath, on the one hand, and the will of the life-giving goddess, on the other, are coordinated by the law of the Sky-God. Responsibility for enforcing it in practice is given to one of the high-ranking guardian spirit mediators of the Sky-God, primarily the World Surveyor Man, and secondarily perhaps the spirit of the cult-centre of an area. The shaman, with the assistance of the guardian spirits, can prevent the death of only those whose days ordained by Kalteś have not been completed yet. (See *Figure 5*.)

A former "mistress" of the Vežakary festivals of the Sacred Town Elder – a woman who hailed from some 90 km further to the north from Tugijany – reported the following hitherto undocumented belief. In the times of their grandfathers it was held that, prior to his death, a person's soul visits in succession the guardian spirits determining his destiny, in order to ask them for their intercession. The power of the spirits is subordinated to the decision of the goddess Kalteś, but they can prolong life with a specified small number (3–7) of days. If the life-span ordained has not yet been completed, any of them can "hold back" the soul and hence the process of death. First of all, the soul starts towards the south, to Kaltys′jany, the sacred place of the goddess Kalteś, and asks if his days have indeed been completed. If so, the goddess "allows him to move on", after which he turns to the World Surveyor Man. According to the informant, this also happens in Kaltys′jany, but in the old days it was presumably located in the sacred place of the World Surveyor Man, in the district of the mouth of the Irtysh (between the villages of Belogor′e and Troickoe).[7] If he too allows the soul

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[7]   The concrete regional world-image, as conceived by the Ostyaks of the mouth of the Kazym (cf. 7.), probably extended, towards the south, to about Kaltys′jany.
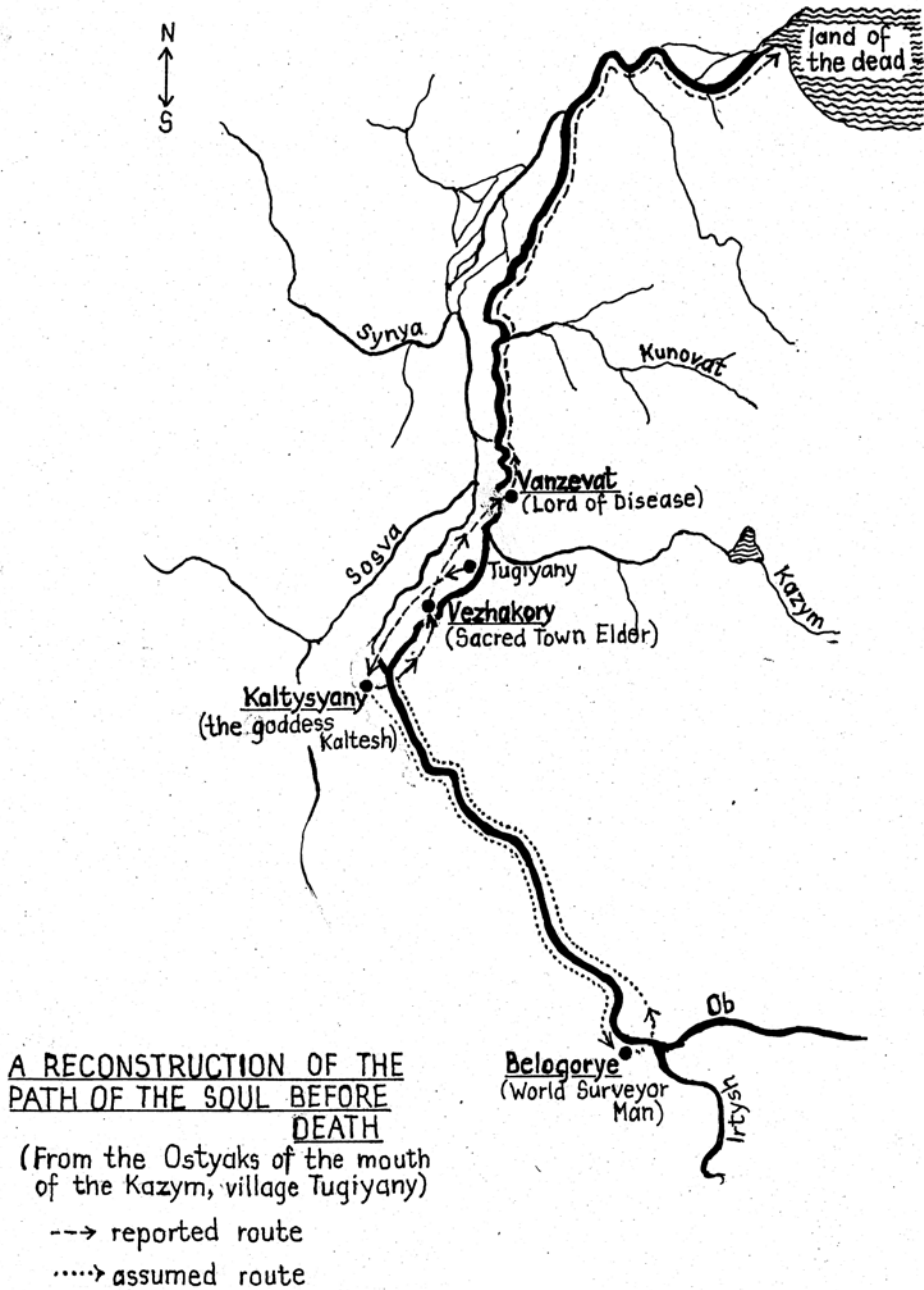
Figure 5.

to move on, it turns towards the north, weeping and crying, and goes to Vežakary, to the Sacred Town Elder. The latter's decision is particularly important, as the next stage is already Vanzevat, lying north of the mouth of the Kazym, – the village of the Lord of Disease, Ost. Kaz. *χĭń wǫrt* and the "Lower-World Elder", *ĭʌ mŭw ĭki* or "Underfoot Elder", *kŭr ĭʌpi ĭki*. The two spirits, kept in evidence as brothers, are seated in neighbouring Little Vanzevat (*aj wańśawət = sŭmət ńŏʌ*) and in (Great) Vanzevat (/*wǫn*/ *wańśawət*) (Schmidt 1983a: 355–356). If they refuse to allow the soul to proceed, then the person cannot die, however grave his condition might be. If they do let it proceed, the soul finally sets off for the north, the land of the dead, near the mouth of the Ob.

Consequently, the seat of the Sacred Town Elder was probably regarded as the last station on the boundary between life and death. It may be presumed that the territory between Vežakary and Vanzevat was a transitional zone, as it were, from where the benevolence of the Sacred Town Elder could still get a person back into real life.

The above communication would remain a one-off curiosity, were it not authenticated by the play "The Sacred Town Elder and the dead person", of the bear feast repertory of the Šerkal Ostyaks, further to the south. In a version of it collected by Steinitz (1975: 400–404; 1976: 287, 289), a man lies down on the ground, singing that, after his illness, he has already been put in the grave. Offering a horse in sacrifice, he invokes the World Surveyor Man and then the goddess Kalteś, but they fail to come to save him. In the depths of despair, he appeals to the Sacred Town Elder, who appears and, digging him out of the grave with his stick, revives him. According to Terëškin's communication, he was "dug out" of the grave by a player dressed as a bear. A version from the Little Sosʹva noted down by me has a humorous ultimate tone. The dead person appeals directly to the Sacred Town Elder to hurry to his aid "in the sacred form of mouse and bear". The latter puts on his bear's claws and, turning into a mouse, he approaches the grave and, as a bear, he digs him out. The resurrected person returning home is thought to be a ghost by his family, who run away from him in panic. According to the informant, G. P. Smolin, the serious version was also known in his group. The play has so far been documented with data only from the Šerkal Ostyaks belonging in the immediate cult district of the Sacred Town Elder.

The horizontal journey of the soul outlined above is actually a transformation of the vertical scheme of passing to the next world. Of such a cartographic representation of the vertical world-picture we have examples from other Ob-Ugrian groups as well (cf. 7.). In the central area of the Ob, where, in

the course of history, the cult-centres of the guardian spirits of the highest order were located, the bear's relationship with disease, death, and the afterworld is expressed in precisely the person of the Sacred Town Elder. Its relationship with life and death, the "thawed" layer between the earth surface and the frozen earth is – as has been seen earlier on – supported by a whole range of conceptions. The concretized "sepulchral" aspect may be based, amongst other things, on the fact that, because of the perennially frozen layer, graves were dug in this relatively thin, soft layer. The graves, protected by beam-structures, but previously probably lacking them, were chiefly accessible to two animals – i.e. the bear and the mouse. As for the former, in the bear songs the Sky-God specially forbids it to disturb the graves and the corpses; for the latter, in many places fine pearls are strewn into the grave, so that it should busy itself with collecting these, rather than with damaging the corpse, its outfit and sacrificial foods.

6.2.2.6. *Shaman helping spirit:* concept 24

While functions 2-3-4 contain motifs that may appear in connection with other guardian spirits too, in the field of shamanism the Sacred Town Elder very clearly stands out among the other spirits. Kannisto's records from the most diverse northern Vogul groups are, in fact, all connected with the shaman ritual.

When healing, the shaman usually invokes several guardian spirits so as to learn the cause of the disease and the person of the spirit competent to eliminate it. If it is the Sacred Town Elder, he invariably appears in the form of a bear, from underneath – in contrast with the other spirits, which arrive through the roof (Upper Loz′va Vogul: Kannisto, Liimola & Virtanen 1958: 428; Sos′va Vogul: Kannisto & Liimola 1951: 357). The healing function of the bear is so characteristic that, of all the protecting spirits, Rombandeeva singles out the bear-shaped spirit that she calls Elder of Jeli Town as something of a physician-specialist (1984: 107). Such a role of the bear conceived of as the lord = mediator of the transitional zone between the middle and the lower worlds is indeed quite obvious.

His power is further increased by his mouse form. Through it, even the unclean places on the earth surface become accessible, as is expressed in a song of invocation of the Sacred Town Elder, accompanied by the shaman's drum: "My father the Sky-God has set me to visit the unclean places visited by woman/man" (Sos′va Vogul: Kannisto & Liimola 1951: 357). A still greater advantage is his ability to penetrate between the layers of the earth. In

the folklore of the Šerkal Ostyaks there is a special formula to suggest this: "I went into 7/8 crannies of two frozen earth (-layers)" (Steinitz 1975: 387); – it is also known with the anterior constituent "thawed and frozen (earth)".

By this, we are to understand the transitional sphere of the thawed earth, which, in the play of the dead person resurrected, is symbolized by the grave. The soul that has arrived at this place has already crossed the frontier of real life – i.e. the surface of the earth – but has not got down to the kingdom of death, the real nether world. He cannot, single-handedly, get out on either side. At this point, a person is neither alive nor dead, irrespective of his actual state of health, for his soul-bird may have broken loose for the most diverse reasons. He can be saved only by the lord of the sphere, i.e. the bear/ mouse. On the horizontal plane, he is embodied by the Sacred Town Elder, in the central Ob region; but, when one stops to think of it, the "lower"-signed eldest god-son of the southwestern Voguls – who turns into a "hero" bear – is also attached to the boundary between the underworld's lake and the human sphere. It is the bear that turns the soul back at the boundary of the two worlds. If there existed, in Ob-Ugrian culture, a "lower"-signed psychopomp animal, it too would probably be the bear.

Up until now, it has seemed as though the zone of prevalence of Siberian bear shamanism, built on the concept of the "lower" bear, ends precisely on the Ob-Ugrian tribal area. In the northern portion of it, it was the predominance of the concept of the "celestial" bear, while in the southern section it was the changing of the ethnic culture that prevented it being identified. With the above in mind, it may fairly be assumed that, in the north, this complex of ideas was coded among the historical layers of the cult of the guardian spirit the Sacred Town Elder. If there were a shamanism with journey of the soul and a shaman belonging to a given community guardian spirit, then his shamans could be the bear shamans. For the time being, all we can assume with some probability is that the northern bear-shaped spirit – mentioned by Karjalainen – that the shamans appealed to when doing their healing is presumably to be taken to mean the Sacred Town Elder.

7. Ideas for a historical reconstruction of the bear cult

The interrelationships demonstrated in the paper suggest that the Ob-Ugrian bear cult is of a wider reference than the "most powerful animal of the forest" concept, to be encountered in the traditional literature, and Černecov's thesis of "the ancestor of the moiety". Its roles as mediator tie in with cardinal points in the world-picture and are to be treated in that context.

The regional (tribal?) world-image variants are scarcely possible to extrapolate from the stock of data available at present. One trend, however, can be demonstrated – namely, that at some stage of historical development the regional world-concepts were projected horizontally onto specific geographical locations – and they clearly constituted a system of specified cult centres. During the reconstructions, two contrasting principles of the changes caused by the migrations are to be taken into account. On the one hand, the migrating sections of the people took with them their guardian spirits; on the other hand, the geographically outstanding sacred places remained, with only the character of the spirits residing over them changing in the course of the migrations. As regards the bear cult, we must not lose sight of the fact that the concept complexes reflected by its regional variants are not identical – e.g. the northern system and ritual differed from the southern, Konda variant and probably from the eastern Ostyak variant too.

In the north, the cartographic aspect of the world-picture may have been influenced by the later trend – productive right until recently – of linking the mythical personages to some particular villages. The ideological grounds for including the mythical personages significant for the whole society (and their cult centres) in the highly heterogeneous, locally-socially determined category of "guardian spirits" may be that they are all subordinated to the Sky-God, who can be assigned to no single location. The character of the beings with a positive function is not substantially altered by their becoming local guardian spirits. In the case of the negative Lord of Disease and the Lord of the Underworld, however, we can observe a differentiation of their original, ambivalent role. They are not only the masters of death, but, by withholding it, the masters of life as well. Based on their latter aspect is the protection of a local social unit, in the course of which – according to formal logic – they actually limit the forces of their own sphere. It is interesting that up until now it was largely the subordinates – the sons and daughters – of the Lord of Disease that tended to be substantiated with data from a few villages (e.g. Obdorsk Ostyak: Pápay 1905a: 27); recently, both Gemuev and myself have been hearing expressly about the guardian spirit of the Lord of Disease. The word "son", standing after the name of the spirit, sometimes refers not to a genuine descendant, but is a term of endearment.

From the Voguls of the Sos′va–Sygva too we have data on a phenomenon similar to the cartographic projection of the world-picture in the central Ob region, discussed earlier on. In this region, the Lord of the Underworld ("Куль отыр") resides in the neighbourhood of the northernmost village, Jasunt, on the Upper Sygva. According to belief, he carries down the Sygva

and the Sosʹva the souls he has seized – presumably to the land of the dead, near the mouth of the Ob. When he reaches the Sosʹva, the most powerful guardian spirit of the region, the Elder of the Middle Sosʹva (near the village of Sartynʹja) may command him to take it back. If, on the other hand, he "lets it move on", the person dies (Gemuev & Sagalaev 1986: 45). Gemuev was struck by the similarity of the idol's attributes and ritual to those of the eastern, Jugan Ostyak local Spirit of Disease (Kulemzin 1984: 118). He indicates that the mythological status of the Lord of the Nether World has recently transformed in the cultic life: his function of causing death has been replaced by the positive role of local protecting spirit (ibid. 142–143). The seat of the guardian spirit of the region, who, I suspect, possesses the character of a bear – the War God of Munkes – can be found on the Sygva, about four villages away from Jasunt downstream. Gemuev thinks it may have been the cult-centre of the medieval Ljapin principality (128–129). Though in a different context, he does mention that the totem-ancestors of the Voguls of the Sygva (= Ljapin) included the bear (175). For the moment, we have no data on the soul-saving function of the War God of Munkes. His person seems to be later in origin than that of the Sacred Town Elder.

The best clue to the cartographic world-picture of the Voguls of the Upper Konda, Pelym, Lozʹva, Upper Sosʹva region – who have a southwestern-type culture – is the myth of the eldest god-son turning into a "hero" bear (cf. 5.1.2.2., 5.4.2.). The Lozʹva version assigns the lake of the country of the dead an entirely concrete location, namely, the neighbourhood of the central settlement of the Upper Konda, Leuši (Munkácsi 1892–1902: CCCLXII). The fortress of the god-son is a certain *jäχ-tumėn*-town, which Munkácsi does not consider to be a concrete place-name, since its anterior constituent has the general meaning of 'lake formed by a river' (ibid.). In the Upper Sosʹva version, however, the lake of the land of the dead is called *jäχ-tumėn*. Whether or not it can be bound to a specific location, the mythological scheme itself is close to the concept held near the Ob: the "hero" bear defying the destructive forces is located on the boundary of the nether world. On the basis of the texts, its person cannot be regarded as identical with some high-ranking local guardian spirit. If we project onto it the analogy of the Pelym God – whether by identifying him with it or regarding him in his role as the controlling archspirit of the region – we obtain a system different in orientation from the northern one.

The most uncertain element of the reconstruction of ancient cultic life is the reference system of the social organization. At present, we have so little concrete evidence as to the question of tribes, moieties, clans etc. that their

character, hierarchic system and historical-geographical boundaries are very difficult to define contentually (e.g. by Sokolova's method of analysing marriage trends). In any case, something we can be certain of is that the material of the last couple of centuries reflects the final disintegration of a system that was once far more complete and far clearer. On the basis of the interrelationships indicated in the paper, several tempting ideas for reconstruction might arise – for instance, that, in the old days, cult leaders of the *por* moiety, with the help of the bear, mediated towards the underworld, while those of the *mōś* moiety, through the forces symbolized in the present-day World Surveyor Man, did the same towards the upper world; that, in the tradition of the bear-killing mythical heroes, the representatives of the moieties kill bears with signs opposite to their own – the sons of the Town Lord killing an "upper" bear, the World Surveyor Man a "lower" one etc. However, given the amount of data we possess at present on Vogul-Ostyak language, culture, and history, such hypotheses would bear all the marks of scientific adventurousness.

The community bear ritual shows three types of feast, if we take seriously V. Novickij's communication. The most archaic one – also judged by Černecov to be as such – is the septennial periodic festival of Vežakary. A halfway house is represented by Novickij's version, which is periodic, but the number of years is dependent on the sex of the bears (were there female bear's skins too?), as is the case at the bear feasts that Černecov called sporadic. Sporadic bear feasts are to be taken to mean the more recently created feasts held to honour each single bear killed.

The investigation of the relationships of the bear cult and shamanism is hampered by the fact that the character, system, and historical evolution of Ob-Ugrian shamanism have not been explored. It is customary to regard shamanism in these peoples as a late arrival, and therefore not very much advanced. If, in the past half a millennium, their culture has continuously shown signs of disintegration and retrogression, it is worth pondering why shamanism, of all its elements, should represent a contrary trend – one, moreover, that is only just beginning to develop. It is possible that, at some point in the past, other, no less highly developed varieties of trance techniques and religious mediation were known as well. In the field of healing, it would be of prime importance to clarify which are the types of soul-birds that the guardian spirits designated with the attribute of "soul-pannier" and held to be outstanding healers are competent to retrieve, and in which cases they can do that. When a "loss of soul" or illness arises, Ob-Ugrian culture does not draw a sharp distinction between somatic and psychic causes. It is to be

suspected that the mediative activity of the Sacred Town Elder and guardian spirits like him serve, in part, psychiatric healing; nor is the motif of the resurrection of the dead to be understood necessarily in the physical sense.

The hitherto unstudied "esoteric", psychological side of the Ob-Ugrian bear cult requires more detailed research. At first impression, it seems that psychological archetypal schemes are embodied chiefly in two cultic beings: the World Surveyor Man and the bear. The latter – along with the guardian spirit attaching to it – seems more suitable than the other mythical beings for symbolizing several important motifs, e.g. the rebirth of the soul from the earth, the deity sacrificing his own animal form etc. In identifying the cause of the high level of development of the Ob-Ugrian bear cult, Katalin U. Kőhalmi points, with full justification, to the intertwining of the early hunting culture's complex of ideas about the animal reborn and the quasi-totemistic ancestor- and hero-cult of the steppes (1981:146). To this we might add that the "esoteric side" was clearly instrumental in lending the bear motif a far greater than average cultural loading.

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(Originally published by the author in English)

A Khanty Bear Song from the Little Sos′va
(1983)

In 1982, I received an opportunity to collect folklore from the Ob Khanty and Mansi during the months of August and September. This was through a collaboration with the Leningrad and Tomsk State Universities and under the direction of Vladislav Mikhajlovič Kulemzin, the famous researcher of the Eastern Khanty religious tradition. While working in Polnovat, the main village of the Kazym estuary region, I accidentally came across Grigorij Prokop′evič Smolin, who had been born in the Little Sos′va region. Using a tape recorder, I recorded 51 songs from him.

The Little Sos′va is a southern tributary that branches off the middle course of the Northern or Great Sos′va River, and it flows almost parallel to the Ob River, along the region where the Middle Ob Khanty live. Until recently, this had been an area inhabited by the Khanty. Although they were separated from the Ob River by as little as eighty kilometers at points, the inhabitants of this area had a very distinct lifestyle from the fishing-based livelihood of the Ob Khanty. The Little Sos′va Khanty developed their own unique culture of hunting on foot, as the taiga along the Little Sos′va was famous far and wide for its rich population of sables and wild game. They maintained a lively economic and social connection to the Šerkal dialect-speaking Ob Khanty, as well as to the Ob Mansi. By the beginning of the century, the sable populations along the Ob had completely disappeared; during the fall and winter hunting season, large groups of hunters from the Ob River would travel to the Little Sos′va in pursuit of better game. During the summer fishing season, many from the Little Sos′va would visit fishing spots along the Ob, and trade flowed by way of the Ob villages as well. Residents of the estuary region also had interactions with the Middle Sos′va Mansi. The relative isolation of their home settlements, in combination with the regular interaction they enjoyed with different groups from within their own ethnicity, created a thriving culture of folklore. After the establishment of Soviet rule, the endangered wild game populations were put under protection, and the wildlife park that was established played an important role in the restoration of the ecological balance of the Middle Ob region.

Following World War II, the hunting villages of the Little Sosʹva (*năka-kurt, šuχtər-kurt, tŭńśəŋ-kurt, χaŋlasəŋ-kurt, χaŋa-kurt,* and *jeməŋ-kurt*), which had only about a dozen inhabitants, increasingly became depopulated as their residents moved to the populous, often multiethnic villages along the Ob River, which offered better job opportunities and living conditions. Everywhere, the younger generation assimilated into the local population.

The language and culture of the Little Sosʹva Khanty is a variant of the Šerkal dialect and culture. Part of this population spoke Mansi natively (the Ob, or Middle Sosʹva, dialect), while the men also knew Russian.

Grigorij Prokopʹevič Smolin was born around 1908 in the village called *tŭńśəŋ-kurt*. Having lost his parents early on, he was raised by relatives in various villages along the Ob amid extremely difficult circumstances. He spent part of his childhood in Muligort, where he spoke the local Šerkal Khanty and Ob Mansi dialects. As a young man, he moved back to the village of his birth. Later, he married Marija Jefimovna Novickaja, a woman of mixed heritage (Mansi, Khanty, and Russian) from the same village. Of their children, only two daughters survived. Smolin was declared unfit for military service due to a leg injury from childhood (none of the men from his village who served in the military returned from the war). He spent his whole life hunting, and he worked at one point as a gamekeeper at the Little Sosʹva Nature Reserve. He was an exceptional hunter and had killed 17 bears and countless elk and sables. In his old age, he moved to Polnovat, where his daughter lived with her husband.

Grigorij Prokopʹevič cannot read or write, and he speaks Russian, if not well, at least satisfactorily. Drawn to his people's folklore since his youth, he has become an unrivaled master, traveling around the entire Middle Ob region. Except for shamanism, there is perhaps no aspect of Ob-Ugric folklore that he does not practice at the highest level. He tells stories, sings, and composes poetry in Khanty and Mansi alike. He has been a popular singer of the bear ceremony in the past, and he plays the five-string *narəs juχ* instrument. As a performer, he is extremely skilled and approachable. The local cultural institutions, which highly value his work, organize touring circuits and performances for him. The Salekhard and Khanty-Mansi radio stations have recorded many of his performances. He is the last of his people's great performers.

When I first met him, it caused some confusion that I spoke the rather unusual dialect of the Tugijany village of the Kazym estuary, but after a week, I quickly adjusted to speaking the Šerkal dialect. Aware of the rapid decline of folk singing and the fact that Smolin's song repertoire was far more original

and archaic than his prose repertoire, I tried to record as many songs as I could from him. Grigorij Prokopʹevič proved to be a worthy successor of the famous singers of yore: I must have recorded an average of about 600 lines of song from him every day. I would immediately jot them down, and after playing back the recording, we would try to clarify the sections I had questions about. The old man was inexhaustible in his explanations, but ultimately, he did not understand the purpose of linguistic analysis, and it was his wife who was more helpful in this respect. Analyzing the songs was more difficult than singing and transcribing combined; Smolin and his wife would explain unknown words to me in Khanty, Russian, and less frequently Mansi, but getting clarification on grammatical questions was hopeless (this is reflected in the various gaps and deficiencies of the material). To explain Mansi songs, they offered translations into Khanty. I recorded from Smolin four individual songs, eight bear songs, fifteen bear ceremony performance songs, one bear-awakening song, seventeen bear ceremony idol songs, one heroic epic song, and five prayer songs.

It was during my last few days there that Smolin sang the song of the bear's origin story. Once it looked like he was running out of bear ceremony-related material, he suddenly told me that he would sing for me the holiest song (*met tarəm ar*). This song was not permitted to be performed outside the bear ceremony, but were this to happen nevertheless, it could only occur after dark, in the frontmost corner of the house *(mŭt sŭŋ)*, with food and drink offerings laid out and birch polypore smoldering.

The song is a well-known version of the story of the bear descending from the sky. This version only hints at the transformation into an animal, the divine prohibitions and instructions, and the fall into sin, whereas it expands the story with the motif of the goddess Kalteś coming to earth. This can be assumed to be a newer insertion, characteristic of the Middle Ob religious tradition. This hypothesis is supported by the shift in narration from first-person singular to third person. The conclusion – an explanation of the origin of hibernation – is interesting and is worth paying attention to when interpreting other versions. Within the motif exploring divine prohibitions and their violation, the source of the conflict is that the bear does not have natural, "God-given" food in winter, and at the same time, all other sources of food are forbidden to him. The bear, until it solves this problem in its unique way, through hibernation, is condemned to constant "sinning" (outside of hibernation, the bear is the most dangerous animal in the taiga).

The transcription here was made using a somewhat simplified version of Steinitz's transcription method; phonetic features that are not phonologically

distinctive (cacuminalization, devoicing, etc.) are not marked. I have marked the main linguistic features used in song, such as the lengthening of ə into a full vowel and consonant lengthening. Stress markers indicate the distribution of musical accents, not linguistic stress. Filler syllables are set aside with parentheses according to the Béla Kálmán method. Given that the text was originally transcribed alongside the musical notation, the sounds that are not musically significant are written above each line. The translation is stricter than those by Steinitz, but I have not translated the semantically superfluous words *aj* 'small', *ɔtəŋ* 'end, beginning', *χu* 'man, person', *jăm* 'good', etc. My abbreviations follow the DEWO conventions.

wɔj ar (turəm ewət estəm ar)

     nŭ·m turəm χu·(ja·) (χ) jĭ·ɣ°m ɔmsta·(ɣa)
     nŭ-m kŭrəs χu· (ɣ) a·śem ɔmsta·(ɣa)
     sɔ·rńeŋ śŭrpə· ta-pət χɔ·t(a)
     ta·pət χɔ·t(a) tĭ·pemna· (ɣə)
5   *(ɣ) e·nəmta χu· jɔ·śem jĭ·t(ə)*
     (ɣ) e·nəmtə χu· kŭ·rem jĭ·t(ə)
     (ɣ) ɔ·jka ⁽ʷ⁾ enmi· (ju)ɣi·jətme·m(a).
     ta·pt(ə) weśpə· χu·nŋ turə·m(a)
     (ɣ) a·śem ɔmsi· (ju)ɣi·jətta·(ɣa)
10   *sɔ·rńəm¹ śŭrpə·(ɣa) ta·pət χɔ·t*
     ta·pət χɔ·t tĭ·pemna·(ɣa)
     (ɣ) e·nəmtə χu· jɔ·šem jĭ·t(ə)
     ma· pa (ɣ) enmi· (ju)ɣi·jətme·t(a),
     (ɣ) e·nəmtə· χu· kŭ·rem jĭ·t(ə)
15   *ma· pa (ɣ) enmi· (jə)ɣi·jətte·t(ə).*
     ta·pt weśpə· χu·nŋ turəm(a),
     χu·nŋ turə·m(ə) (ɣ) a·śem mă·lə
     ńŏ·χs sɔtə·(jə) tĭ·səŋ ar pă·nt(ə)
     (ɣ) a·rt jăŋχi· (jə)ɣi·jətta·t(a),
20   *wɔ·j sɔtə·(jə) tĭ·səŋ ar pă·nt(ə)*
     (ɣ) a·rt jăŋχi· (jə)ɣi·jətta·t(a).
     (ɣ) ĭ·n ˢĭ mŏttə· kŭ·temna· -na(jə)²
     ńu·rəm wɔjə· (jə) ńŭ·wtə kŭ·š
     ma· tŏm eťťi·(jə)ɣi·jətme·m(a),

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¹   Broken: instead of *sɔrńə* or *sɔrńəŋ*.
²   Broken: repetition of the locative affix *-na*.

25   *(γ) u·nt wɔjə· (γa) ńŭ·wtə kŭ·š(ə)*
        ma· tŏm eťťi·(ja)γi·jətme·m(a),
        ńu·rəm wɔjə· (jə) ńŭ·wtə pe·ŋk(ə)
        śĭ·tə eťťi·(ja)γi·jətme·t(a).
        (γ) ĭ·n śĭ mŏttə· (γa) kŭ·temna·
30   *(γ) u·ttem kŭtna·, (γ) u·ttem kŭtna·*
        su·rten pŭ³ χŭwa·t(a) χŭ·w pŭnna·(γa)
        wɔ·j tŏm eťťi·(ja)γi·jətme·m(a),
        me·s χŭwa·t(a) χŭ·w pŭnna·(γa)
        wɔ·j tŏm eťťi·(jə)γi·jətme·m(aᵗ).
35   *nŏ·msəŋ χu· nŏ·msemna·(jə)*
        χŏ·tə numsi· (ja)γi·jətte·m(a):
        „nŭ·m turəm χu· (χ) a·śemna·
        χă·ntə χu· χŏ·ras ewə·t(ə)
        ja·nas šĭra·(γa) mŭ·ja kerti·(ja)-
40   *mu·ja kerti·(ju)γi·jətma·t(a)?"*
        sɔ·rńəŋ śŭrpə· ta·pət χɔ·t(ə),
        ta·pət χɔ·t tĭ·pemna·
        (γ) ɔ·mstem kŭtna·, (γ) ɔ·mstem kŭtna·
        ᵗᵘʷ *ńŏ·χs sɔtə·(jə) tĭ·səŋ ar pă·nt(a)*
45   *tŭ·w tɔťi· (ju)γi·jətma·t(a),*
        wɔ·j sɔtə·(ja) tĭ·səŋ ar pă·nt(a)
        tŭ·w măni· (jə)γi-jətma· t(a).
        „ˢᵃʳ ta·pt χɔtə(jˀ) pă·ťˀ χɔta·
        wɔ·j at tăŋti· (jə)γi·jətte·m(a)!"
50   *ta·ptmit χɔ·t pă·ťˀ χɔta·*
        wɔ·j tŏm tăŋti·(ju)γi·jətme·m(a).
        χă·tten χăšpə· (χ) u·nə ša·ľ(ə)
        tĭlśen χăšpə· (γ) u·n jăm ša·ľ(ə)
        lă·p laŋki· (ju)γi·jətma·t(ə).
55   *ńu·rəm wɔjə·(γə) ńŭ·wtə kŭ·š(ə)*
        χă·tt χăšpə· je·məŋ ša·ľ(ə)
        jĭ·rna wŭjti· (ja)γi·jətme·m(a).
        (γ) ĭ·t mĭγ χu· sĭ·raŋ jĭ·ŋk(ə)
        (γ) ĭ·t mĭγ χu· (γ) e·ťaŋ jĭ·ŋk(a)
60   *wɔ·j wanti· (ja)γi·jətte·m(a):*
        (γ) u·χt nujə·(γə) śŭ·ńəŋ mĭ·γ(ə)
        śă·ta kăťťi·γi·jətta·t(a),

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³   Broken: He placed the last word in the line (*pŭn* 'fur') in the wrong position.

(*γ*) *u·χt jerma·k* (*χ*) *u·lmaŋ mĭ·γ(ə)*
śă·ta kăťťi·γi·jətta·t(a);

65 *mĭ·γt kĭńśa· jĭ·ŋkət ewmə·ŋ(a)*
jĭ·ŋkət kĭńś·a mĭ·γət ewmə·ŋ(ə)
śă·ta (γ) uťťi· (jə)γi·jətta·t(a).
ᵘⁿᵗ nŏ·msəŋ χu· (χ) u·nt nŏmsemna.
χŏ·ta numsi· (ja)γi·jətte·m(a):

70 *„ta·pt weśpə· χu·nŋ turə·m(ə),*
χu·nŋ turə·m a·śemna·
ᵗᵘᵗⁿ ĭ·t at esti· (ja)γi-jətte-m(ə)!
u·χt nujə· śŭ·ńəŋ mĭ·γ
u·χt jerma·k śŭ·ńəŋ mĭ·γ(ə),

75 *mă·nem šušta· ka·šəŋ mĭ·γ(ə)*
śă·ta (γ) uťťi·γi·jətta·t.”
śĭ· mŏttə· kŭ·temna·
ma· (γ) ɔ·msiγi·jətta· (ya)
(γ) ŏ·sməŋ nŏrə· (γ) ŏ·smem(a·)

80 *ŏ·sməŋ sŏχə· ŏ·smem(a·)*
wɔ·j ɔmsi·(jə)γi·jətme·m(ə).
ta·pt weśpə· χu·nŋ turə·m
a·śem jŏχti- (jə)γi·jətma·t;
ńŏ·χs sɔt uttə· (χ) a·r păntl ewə·t

85 *wɔ·j sɔt uttə· (γ) a·r păntl ewə·t*
tŭ·w ᵗŏᵐ pa jŏχti·γi·jətma·t(ə).
ka·nt uχə· ka·ntlla·
tĭ·k uχə· tĭ·kllta· . . .
sɔ·t ńɔt pŏnə·m să·mŋ tĭχə·t(ə)

90 *(γ) ĭ·t jŭwti·(jə)γi·jətə·m.*
– ta·pət χɔ·t pă·tə χɔtna·
mŭ·jen χɔśi·γi·jətma·t?
mŭ·jen kăšta· jă·ŋχijtte·n(ə)
mŭ·jen wantta· jă·ŋχijtte·n(ə)?

95 *pŏ·χiťe·, pŏ·χije·,*
śĭ mĭγə· (χ) ɔ·tŋenna·
nă·ŋ jɔšen χun wermi·γi·jətta·t
kŭ·ren χun wermi·γi·jətta·t?
a·t măta·t χɔ·msəp mĭ·γ(ə)

100 *ša·š măta·t mĭ·seŋ mĭ·γ(ə)*
śă·ta (γ) uťťi·γi·jətta·t,

ᵗᵃ̆ᵗ4 ə·nt ke (γ) ujə·nti·jətme·n. –
a·t paγətmemə·n χŏ·jna (γ) ujə·m
χă·tl paγətmemə·n χŏ·jna wantə·m?
105 *ta·pt weśpə· χu·nŋ turə·m*
ńŏ·χs sɔtə· tĭ·səŋ ar pă·nt
pa·ś5 tɔťi·γi·jətma·t.
ńu·rəm wɔjə· χŏ·rasemna·
ta·pət χɔ·t pă·t χɔta·
110 *pa· ś tăŋti·γi·jətme·m.*
ĭ·t mĭγə· sĭ·raŋ jĭ·ŋk
ĭ·t mĭγə· (χ) e·ťaŋ jĭ·ŋk,
χŏ·tt uttə· na·jəŋ śŏra·s
χŏ·tt uttə· (χ) u·rtəŋ śŏra·s
115 *ĭ·sat wanti·γi·jətme·m;*
u·χt jerma·k (χ) u·lmaŋ mĭ·γ
u·χt nujə· (χ) u·lmaŋ mĭ·γ
śă·ta kăťťi·γi·jətta·t.
wo·j tăjtə χu·tm nŏmə·s
120 *χŏ·t numsi·γi·jətte·m:*
,,ta·pt weśpə· χu·nŋ turə·m,
χu·nŋ turə·m a·śem mă·lᵃ
ka·rt sĭŋpə· sĭ·ŋŋ ɔntə·p
mă·nem at werə·nti·jətta·t,
125 *ka·rt sewə·r(ə) tĭ·nəŋ tĭ·j*
ma·nt ĭt at esti·γi·jətta·t
ĭ·t mĭγə· sŭ·ŋəta·
(γ) ĭ·t mĭγə· (γ) ɔ·tŋəta· !”
šĭ·temn jŏχ kerti·γi·jətme·m,
130 *ma· (γ) ɔmstə·, (γ) ɔməstə·*
(γ) ŏ·sməŋ nŏrə· (γ) ŏ·sməma·
(γ) ŏ·sməŋ tăχə· (γ) ŏ·sməma·
wɔ·j ɔmsi·γi·jətme·m.
ta·pt weśpə· χu·nŋ turə·m
135 *a·śem jŏχti·γi·jətma·t.*
ĭ·n tătă· mŭ·j kantəŋ utma·t,
šĭ· kĭńśa· šĭ· kantə·ŋ.
sɔ·t ńɔt pŏnə·m să·mŋ tĭχə·t
ĭ·t jŭwti·γi·jətma·t ;

_____

4   Broken: repetition of the last syllable of the previous line.
5   A clipped pronunciation of the demonstrative pronoun *šĭ*, used in fast speech.

140 *ta·ŋtəŋ χɔ·t ta·ŋt tɔri· –*
γi·jətma·t,
pă·təŋ χɔ·t
pă·tet tɔri·γi·jətma·t.
– pŏ·χije·, pŏ·χije·, – (ma, lŏpt:)

145 *ša·š măta·t šă·nšəp mĭ·γ*
a·t măta·t šă·nšəp mĭ·γ
nă·ŋ juren ănt pa· jŏ·χətta·t.–
kĭ·mət χătll· χu·ttəm a·t
lɔ·mt šukata·m a·r pŏrťə·

150 *(γ) a·rt ăkti·γi·jətma·t,*
mu·χt ruχnə·m a·r(ə) pŭ·t
tŭ·w ăkti·γi·jətma·t.
ka·rt sĭŋpə· sĭ·ŋŋ ɔntə·p
tŭ·w werə·tti·jətma·t,

155 *wŏ·χ sĭŋpə· sĭ·ŋŋ ɔntə·p*
tŭ·w šeŋktə·pti·jətma·t ,
a·j sewə·r(ə) ta·pt ɔtə·ŋ
tŭ·w werə·tti·jətma·t.
śŏ·pər wŏ·χ a·j tan săχa·t

160 *ka·mə wŏ·χ a·j tan săχa·t*
tu·rm wŭťťi·γi·jətma·t.
ĭ·n mălə· (k) ă·ntija·,
a·t paγətme·t χŏ·jna (γ) ujə·m
χă·tl paγətme·t χŏ·jna wantə·m?

165 *– ˢᵃ̆ʳ pŏ·χije·, pŏ·χije·,*
ka·rt sĭŋpə· sĭ·ŋŋ ɔntə·p
nă·ŋ teťťi·γi·jətte,
wŏ·χ sĭŋpə· sĭ·ŋŋ ɔntə·p
nă·ŋ teťťi·γi·jətta·!⁶

170 *(γ) ĭ·t mĭγ χu· sĭ·raŋ jĭ·ŋk*
nă·ŋt esti·γi·jətte·m,
ĭ·t mĭγ χu· je·təŋ jĭ·ŋk
nă·ŋt esti·γi·jətte·m⁽ᵃ⁾.–
ka·rt sĭŋpə· sĭ·ŋŋ ɔntə·p

175 *tŭ·w teťťi·γi·jətma·t,*
tŭ·ʷ jŭpetna· mă·lə (j) ă·n(ə)
χu·təm ewə· (χ) a·j ewe·t

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6 "Suffix parallelism," Smolin's favorite stylistic device.

    tŭ·w šănšəta· (χ) e·stəmtma·t.
    – a·śew ĭt mĭγə· sĭ·raŋ jĭ·ŋk
180   *ma· pa măni·γi·jette·m. –*
    kă·t jĭŋkŋən χu· wŭ·šeta·
    kă·t mĭγŋən χu· wŭ·šeta·
    śĭ· (γ) esti·γi·jətma·t.
    ńŏ·χeŋ tapə·t tɔ·jtaŋə·n
185   *tŭ·wəŋ χu·t tɔ·jtaŋə·n.*
    wɔ·χtə să·m jă·m ɔtəŋtə·n[ə]
    [we] *pɔ·ttə (γ) e·t jă·m ɔtəŋtnn·*
    te·n pa pɔťťi·γi·jətte·t
    – nŭ·m turəm χu· (χ) a·śa să·r,
190   *ńŏ·χs unə· (χ) u·ləŋ pɔje·k*
    nă·ŋen pŏni·γi·jttemə·n:
    ka·rt sewə·r(ə) tĭ·neŋ tĭ·j
    tɔ· nŏχ at wŭjti·γi·jtətta·n,
    e·stətta·n ke, pa e·stata·
195   *(γ) ĭ·t mĭγ χu· sĭ·raŋ jĭ·ŋk*
    ĭ·t mĭγ χu· (χ) e·ťaŋ jĭ·ŋk!
    kă·nšəm ńŏχə· kă·štamə·n(ə)
    kă·nšəm tŭ·w kă·štamə·n. –
    u·n tăχə·ŋŋ ă·n(ə) wŭta·t
200   *a·j tăχə·ŋ ă·n(ə) wŭta·t.*
    wɔ·χtə săm jă·m ɔtəŋtə·n
    pɔ·ttə (γ) e·t jă·m ɔt[əŋ]tə·n
    a·rta pɔťťi·γi·jətte·t(ə),
    ke·ńśəm tŭ·w ɔ·təŋtnn·
205   *a·rta keńśə·tti·jətte·t,*
    ke·ńśəm să·χ[7] ɔ·təŋtə·n
    a·rta keńśə·tti·jətta·n[8].
    ńŏ·χs unə (χ) u·ləŋ pɔje·k
    pa· ś pŏni·γi·jtətta·n:
210   *– ta·pt weśpə· χu·ŋŋ turə·m,*
    me·nttə nŏχ at wŭjti·γi·jtətta·n(ə)!
    ke·ńśəm tŭ·w ɔ·təŋta·mn

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[7] Used incorrectly (?) instead of *sŏχ* 'skin'.
[8] Lines 204 and 206: Difficult to interpret because of the ambiguity of the suffix parallelism and the subject–predicate agreement. Line 204 uses the present participle form with a third-person plural possessive; line 106 uses the present participle form with a second- and third-person dual possessive.

me·n pa keńśə·tti·jətme·n[9]
ke·ńśəm sŏ·χ ɔ·təŋta·mn

215 me·n kănšə·tti·jətme·n.
tɔ· [n] ĭt mĭγ(ə·) sĭ·raŋ jĭ·ŋk
e·stəttan ke· (χə) (χ) ĭ·t esta·tn,
ka·rt sewə·r(ə) tĭ·nəŋ tĭ·j
nŏ·χ ke wŭjti·γi·jtətta·n

220 nŏ·χ [at] wŭjti·γi·jtətta·[n]! –
ne·mt χŭw mărə· (χ) ă·ntɔm utma·t,
ka·rt sewə·r(ə) ša·mťəŋ sĭ·j
śĭ· sĭmti·γi·jətma·t;
ĭ·t mĭγ χu· sĭ·raŋ jĭ·ŋk

225 ĭ·t mĭγ χu· (χ) e·ťaŋ jĭ·ŋk
ĭ·t śĭ esti·γi·jətme·n[(ə)].
(χ) ĭ·jəγə· – ĭ·jəγə·
ńu·rəm wɔ·j pŏ·šχije·n(ə)
kă·nšəm tŭ·w ɔ·tŋije·t

230 kă·nš ńŏχə· (χ) ɔ·tŋije·t
a·rta kăńśə·ti·jətə·m.
nŭ·m turəm χu· (χ) ă·ŋkije·n
nŭ·m kŭrəs χu· (χa) ă·ŋkije·n
ă·t χɔwtə·m lu·l tĭχə·t,

235 lu·l tĭχə·t χŏ·wə pa·j(ə),
χŏ·wə pa·j ɔ·tŋəta·
śĭ· (γ) ɔmsi·γi·γətta·t.
tŭ·wət tăjtə· ńɔ·tl kattə·m,
ńɔ·tl kattə·m a·r pŏχt ewə·t

240 je·tn wɔχtə· jă·m jĭrə·t
a·təŋaja· (χ) ă·n jŏχtta·t,
a·təŋ wɔχtə· jă·m jĭrə·t
je·tnna· (γ) ă·n jŏχtta·t;
a·t kŭttə·p jĭ·rpə na·j(ə)

245 a·t kŭttə·p pɔ·rep na·j
śă·ta (γ) ɔmsi·γi·jətta·t.
ńu·rəm wɔ·j[(ə)] pŏ·χije·t
ĭ·t śĭ (γ) esti·γi·jəma·t
ĭ·t śĭ pati·γi·jəma·t.

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9 The ending -*men* can technically only be a present participle + second-person singular possessive, but it occurs on multiple occasions in places where first-person dual would be expected.

250   *pa· χŏmsa· wa·ŋkləmtll·,*
        χŏ·mta kerə·ťťi·jətta·t,
        pa· χŏmsa· wa·ŋkləmtll·,
        jĭ·rna pati·γi·jətta·t.
        ša·š weγ(ə·) (γ) ă·nt tăjta·t
255   *a·t weγ(ə·) (γ) ă·nt tăjta·t.*
        śĭ· mŏttə· kŭ·tlna·
        χŏ·tə numsi·γi·jətte·m:
        „ĭ·t mĭγ χu· sĭ·raŋ jĭ·ŋk
        ĭ·t mĭγ χu· (χ) e·ťaŋ jĭ·ŋk
260   *pa· χŏms e·wət pa· χŏmsa·*
        wɔ·j răkni·γi·jətte·m,
        χŏ·mta waŋklə·mti·jətte·m⁽ə⁾.”
        wɔ·j šuši·γi·jətte·m
        wɔ·j măni·γi·jətte·m.
265   *(a·t)¹⁰ šaš we·γem⁽ə⁾ χŏ·tama·t*
        a·t we·γem(ə) χŏ·tama·t.
        je·ŋk χăta· ke (χ) u·jətte·m(ə),
        ńu·rəm wɔ·j(ə) ńŭ·wtə kŭ·š
        nŏ·χ śĭ temi·γi·jətte·m,
270   *pŏ·j χăta· ke (χ) u·jətte·m⁽ə⁾,*
        ńu·rəm wɔ·j(ə) ńŭ·wtə kŭ·š
        nŏ·χ śĭ temi·γi·jətte·m⁽ə⁾.
        wɔ·χtə să·m(ə) jă·m ɔtŋe·m
        a·rta wɔχi·γi·jətta·,
275   *pɔ·ttə (γ) e·t jă·m ɔtŋe·m*
        a·rta wɔťťi·γi·jətta-t.¹¹
        (j) ĭ·n śĭ mŏttə· kŭ·temna·
        wɔ·j wertə· lă·mśəŋ pă·nt(ə)
        wɔ·j werta· mĭ·γeŋ pă·nt(a)
280   *wɔ·j wera·nti·jətte·m(a).*
        lɔ·w tĭjpə· (χ) a·r jăm pu·m
        a·rt parti·γi·jətma·t,
        lɔ·w tĭjpə· (χ) a·r pestə·
        (γ) a·rt parti·γi·jətma·t(a).
285   *wɔ·χtə să·m(ə) jă·m ɔtŋe·m*
        pɔ·ttə (γ) e·t jă·m ɔtŋe·m(a)

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¹⁰ Mistaken for the first word of the next line.
¹¹ Instead of *pɔťťiγijətta* 'is freezing, is cold' (?).

lɔ·w tĭjpə· (χ) a·r jăm pu·m
a·rt wɔńśi·γi·jətte·m(a),
lɔ·w tĭjpə· a·r jăm pestə·

290 (γ) a·rt wɔńśi·γi·jətte·m.
ĭ·t mĭγ χu· sĭ·raŋ jĭ·ŋk(a)
(γ) ĭ· mĭγ χu· (χ) e·t́aŋ jĭ·ŋk (a)
mŏ·χa wanti·γi·jtte·m ĭšna· :
(γ) u·χt nujə· śŭ·ńəŋ mĭ·γ

295 u·χt jerma·k(ə) śu·ńəŋ mĭ·γ;
ĭ·n atănta·, (χ) a·tănta·
(γ) a·t măta·t šă·nšəp mĭ·γ
a·t mă·ta·t χŏ·msəŋ mĭ·γ.
pa· χŏms ewə·t wa·ŋkləmtə·m,

300 pa· tăχija· ră·kəntə·m,
pa· χŏms ewə·t ke·rijttə·m[ə]
jĭ·rna kerə́t́i·jətte·m.
ĭ·n lɔw tĭjpə· (χ) a·r(ə) pu·m
a·rt wɔńśi·γi·jətte·m.

305 χu·tnttem ĭ·šna, χu·tnttem ĭ·šna:
wɔ·χtə să·m(ə) jă·m ɔtŋe·m(a)
χă·ś wŏti·γij·ətta·t
χă·ś pɔjti·γi·jətta·t
śĭ· mŏttə· kŭ·temna·

310 ta·pt weśpə· χu·nŋ turə·m
χu·nŋ turə·m a·śem mă·lə
jɔ·χm χărə· sŏ·t́χ ar u·t́
a·rt mŭti·(jə)γi·jətma·t(a),
wŭ·r χărə· sŏ·t́χ ar u·t́

315 a·rt mŭti·(jə)γi·jətma·t(a);
wŭ·r χărə· (χ) a·r(ə) (γ) u·t
śĭ·tə ješti·γi·jətma·t
te·kntaŋe·m(ə) sɔ·wtem ɔ·w
wɔ·j numi·γi·jətte·m(ə),

320 te·kntaŋe·m(ə) wɔ·śpem ɔ·w
wɔ·j numi·γi·jətte·m(ə).
su·rt kŭta·t kŭ·t ńelə·
wɔ·j werə·nti·jetme·m(ə).
wɔ·j arta·ti·jətme·m:

325 šă·nšem jura· jŭ·wmat śaśə·t(ə)
me·wtem jura· jŭ·wmat śaśə·t.

164

u·ntem sɔtə· mĭ·ɣeŋ pă·nt(a)
wɔ·j werə·nti·jətte·m(a),
wɔ·j apə·r(ə)ti·jətte·m,
330   *jɔ·χəm χărə· (χ) a·r(ə) (ɣ) u·t'(ə)*
(ɣ) a·rt ăkti·ɣi·jətte-m(ə),
(ɣ) u·nt χărə· (χ) a·r jăm u·t'(ə)
(ɣ) a·rt wɔńśi·ɣi·jətte·m⁽ə⁾.
te·kntaŋe·m(ə) wɔ·śpem ɔ·w(a)
335   *te·kntaŋe·m(ə) sɔ·wtem ɔ·w*
wɔ·j tekni·(jə)ɣi·jətma·t ⁽ə⁾.
šă·nšem ńŏχti·(ju)ɣi·jətte·m(a):
šă·nšem mări·ɣi·jətta·t(a),
me·wtem ńŏχti·ɣi·jətte·m:
340   *me·wtem mări·ɣi·jətta·t.*
ta·pt weśpə· χu·ŋŋ turə·m
χu·t χunpə· χu·ŋŋ turə·m
sŭ·s pet·uttə· wa·n χătll·⁽ᵃ⁾
tu·rəm werə·nti·jətma·t,
345   *tă·t pet uttə· wa·n χătll·⁽ᵃ⁾*
tu·rəm werə·nti·jətma·t;
pŏ·šəχ ka·r(ə) ka·t'əm je·ŋk(ə)
śĭ·tə pɔt'i·ɣi·jətma·t(ə),
pŏ·šəχ ka·r(ə) ka·t'əm je·ŋk⁽ᵃ⁾
350   *śĭ·tə pɔt'i·ɣi·jətma·t(a).*
wɔ·j šuštə· lă·mśəŋ pă·nt(a)
wɔ·j šuštə· mĭ·ɣeŋ pă·nt(a)
wɔ·j werə·nti·jəttə·m(ə) ;
wɔ·j ŏttə· tu·χrəs wŭ·r⁽ə⁾
355   *wɔ·j kănši·ɣi·jəttə·m(ə),*
wɔ·j ŏttə· šĭ·kat wŭ·r(ə)
wɔ·j kănši·ɣi·jətme·m⁽ə⁾.
śĭ mŏttə· kŭ·tlna·
a·mpen kŭrə· χă·rəs šu·š
360   *tu·rəm werə·nti·jətta·t(a),*
χu·jen kŭrə· χă·rəs šu·š
śĭ·tə werə·nti·jətta·t;
ta·ŋk pŭnə· (χ) a·j(ə) tɔ·ś
śĭ·tə pati·ɣi·jətma·t(a).
365   *śĭ·kt juχpə· ju·χəŋ wŭ·r(ə)*
śĭ·kt juχpə· ju·χəŋ u·nt(ə)

wɔ·j kănši·γi·jətme·m(a).
χu· wɔj ke· we·t mărə·
ma· temi·γi·'jətme·m(ə),
370 ne· wɔj ke· ńă·t mărə·
[ma· temi·γi·jətme·m;]
mĭ·γ śŭrpə· śŭ·rəŋ χɔ·t(ə)
śĭ·tə ješti·γi·jətma·t(a),
mĭ·γ parpə· pa·rəŋ χɔ·t(ə)
375 śĭ·tə ješti·γi·jətma·t(a).
tu·ptəta· we·t at te·t
wɔ·j tăŋətti·jətme·m(ə),
wa·ťjuχta ke· ńă·t at te·t(a)
wɔ·j tăŋətti·jətme·m.
380 mĭ·γ śŭrpə· śŭ·rəŋ χɔte·m⁽ə⁾
wɔ·j ješti·γi·jətme·t(a).
(γ) u·χt nujə· śŭ·ńəŋ tĭχte·m(a)
wɔ·j terma·tti·jətme·m.
śĭ· mŏttə· kŭ·temna·
385 kŭ·t ɔtə·m pă·tema·
wɔ·j ŏťťi·γi·jətte·m(a).
(γ) ĭ·j pelə·k nŏ·msemna·
χŏ·ťə numsi·γi·jətte·m(ə):
ne· ńŭttə·p sɔ·təŋ χă·r(a)
390 wɔ·j numsi·γi·jətte·m(ə),
χu·(ja) ńŭttə·p sɔ·təŋ χă·r(a)
(γ) ĭ·j pelə·k a·ŋktemna·
wɔ·j χutn·ti·jətte·m.
śĭ· mŏttə· kŭ·temna·
395 (γ) ĭ·j pelə·k nŏ·msemna·
kŭ·t ɔtə·m sɔ·təŋ sŭ·ŋ(ə)
wɔ·j ńuχti· (jə)γi·jətte·m.
ńŭ·wt tĭlśə·p tĭ·lśəŋ tătə·
śă·χˀ wɔ·j χɔtti·γi·jəttə·m(ə),
400 ńŭ·wt tĭlśə·p tĭ·lśəŋ tă·tˀ
wɔ·j χɔtti·γi·jətte·m⁽ᵉ⁾.
ĭn je·ŋk śŏχtə·ŋ χŭ·w tăte·¹²
tɔ·ś śŏχtə·ŋ χŭ·w tăte·
śă·χə wɔjna χɔtti·γi·jətta· ;

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¹² tătə 'winter'; the pronunciation of ə changes to e in song.

405 *mă·šja χɔ·t sŭ·ŋemna·*
  mə·šja χɔ·t lŏ·χemna·
  tă·t ɔmsi·γi·jətte·m(ə).
  ˢᵃ̆ᵡᵃ a·kań wenšə·p jĭ·səŋ turə·m,
  jĭ·səŋ turə·m tĭ·γt pŏrana·
410 *mᵊ·(γ) ewəttaŋe·m ta·wənttə·*
  ru·tem mă·l
  tă·t χŭwa·t ă·nt at jăχte·t(a) !
  mĭ·γ śŭrpə· śŭ·rəŋ χɔ·t
  tĭ·γ at ɔmsi·γi·jətte·t(ə),
415 *mĭ·γ taŋtə·p ta·ŋtəŋ χɔ·t*
  tĭ·γ at ɔmsi·γi·jətte·t!
  a·rew pa· χŏ·tata·t(a)
  mɔ·ńśew pa· χŏ·tata·t.

Animal Song (Song of the Descent from the Sky)

  Lived in by my father the upper sky (god)
  lived in by my father the upper heaven (god)
  seven houses of golden roof beams,
  inside seven houses
5 the joint of my growing male arm
  The joint of my growing male leg
  I, old man, grew it.
  Seven-faced[13] smokehole god
  inhabited by my father
10 seven houses of golden roof beams,
  inside seven houses
  the joint of my growing male arm,
  indeed it did grow,
  the joint of my growing male leg
15 it does grow.

---

[13] The modifier, whose meaning had grown obscure, that was used to describe the main god was translated by both the informant and Terëškin as 'seven-faced'. They cannot provide an explanation based in folk belief. The Little Sos′va Khanty are also familiar with the word Steinitz documented as *weńśəp* 'Stelle, wo die Zeltstangen oben zusammenstossen; First, Firstteil des Satteldaches beim viereckigen Haus… ', but they do not associate it with the given formula. Despite this, Steinitz's explanation – that the modifier originally referred to the house in which God lived (OVE 2: 229) – seems appropriate.

Seven-faced smokehole god,
my father the smokehole god
looped trails of many hundreds of sables[14]
he walks many of them,
20 looped trails of many hundreds of elk
he walks many of them.
Meanwhile
swampy animal's eight claws
appeared on me, behold,
25 forest animal's eight claws
appeared on me, behold,
swampy animal's eight teeth (too)
appeared like this.
Meanwhile
30 I lived meanwhile, I lived meanwhile
span-length long fur
appeared (on me), behold, on the animal,
palm-length long fur
appeared (on me), on the animal.
35 With my brainy male brain
how I think:
"My father the upper sky (god)
from the form of a Khanty man
into a different kind why did he change
40 why did he change me?"
Seven houses of golden roof beams,
inside seven houses
inside seven houses
I live meanwhile, I live meanwhile
on looped trails of many hundreds of sables
45 he (God) set off,
on looped trails of many hundreds of elk
he departed.
"Into the last house of the seven houses
let me, animal, enter!"
50 Into the seventh house, into the last house

---

[14] Because of the homonymy of *sɔt* 'hundred' and 'luck', the translation 'lucky in sables, looped many paths' is also possible. In this case, the final vowel of *sɔtə* is an adjectivizer.

I, animal, did enter.
Sun-patterned big scarf
moon-patterned big beautiful scarf
covered (the lower opening).[15]
55   With the swampy animal's eight claws
the sun-patterned holy scarf
I did move aside.
Colorful landscape of the lower world
colorful landscape of the lower world
60   I, animal, gaze at:
land rich in thin baize
it looks like, there,
land rich in thin silk…[16]
it looks like, there.
65   Its water more pleasant than its land,
its land more pleasant than its water
it was (= is) there.[17]
With my woodland brainy male woodland brain
how I thought:
70   "Seven-faced smokehole god,
my father the smokehole god
if only he would lower me!
Land rich in thin baize,
land rich in thin silk,
75   cheerful land (for) me to step on
is there."
Meanwhile

[15] On the floor of the seventh house there is an opening through which God admires the earth; he keeps it covered with a cloth. Knowing that his son, who has transformed into an "animal" (that is, a bear), will want to descend through it, he forbids him from this place.

[16] The first explanation I received of the word *(χ)ulmaŋ* was that it means 'draped, covered'. Upon further questioning, Smolin and his wife changed their response and described the term as equivalent to the Mansi adjective *ūliŋ* 'cheerful, delightful'. By analogy to *sŏw* 'melody' and *sŏwmaŋ* 'melodic', the use of the derivational suffix *maŋ* is conceivable, but it is also possible that we are dealing with a word whose meaning has grown obscure (and takes the form of *χulmaŋ*?). Terëškin did not know the word either (spoken communication).

[17] A land whose water is (also) pleasant, and vice versa; that is, a landscape that is pleasant in every way. By analogy to the expression "egyik kedvesebb, mint a másik" ("each is more pleasant than the next"), the Hungarian translation conveys the Khanty sentence quite well.

on the sat-upon-by-me
pillowy pillow of my pallet
80   pillowy pillow of my nightclothes
did I, animal, sit.
Seven-faced, smokehole god
my father arrived;
from his trail of many hundreds of sables
85   from his trail of many hundreds of elk
did he arrive.
Into rageful head rage
into angry head anger [did he burst];[18]
his hollow quiver loaded with a hundred arrows
90   is thrown down.
"In the last house of the seven houses
what of yours remained (there)?
What of yours are you going out to search for,
what of yours are you going out to look at?
95   My little son, my dear son,
on that land
how would your arm even bear it,
how would your leg even bear it?
Foot-[19]deep, mossy-tussocky earth
100   knee-deep, grassy-tussocky earth
is there,
if you didn't know."
That we spent the night, who knows,
that we spent the day, who saw?
105   Seven-faced smokehole god
on the looped trail of many hundreds of sables
he set off again.
In my swampy animal form
into the last house of the seven houses

---

[18] Here the song is likely missing a verbal line: "went (into a rage)".

[19] The meaning of the word *at* 'lap' is becoming obscure in some folklore formulas (DEWO 54). It appears in the current song in its original meaning in line 376. In the formula expressing depth, just as so often in clarifications of parallel words, I received the explanation that it was the "same word" as *šaš* 'knee'. The same is true of line 255, where it appears as the parallel word of *šaš weɣ* 'knee strength'. The translation 'foot' is conjecture, based on the fact it simultaneously indicates both the body part and a measure of length. As a parallel word for 'knee' < Mansi *āl* 'leg' (?).

110   I stepped inside again.
        The colorful landscape of the lower world
        the multicolored landscape of the lower world,
        omnipresent Lady's world
        omnipresent Princely world
115   I have watched it all:
        land… of thin silk
        land… of thin baize
        it looks like, there.
        The animal bore my three thoughts
120   I thought it through:
        "Seven-faced smokehole god,
        my father the smokehole god, though,
        arched cradle of arched iron
        have it made for me,
125   at the dear end of the iron chain
        let me descend
        to the landscape of the lower world
        to the border of the lower world!"
        With this, I turned back,
130   to the sat-upon-by-me, sat-upon
        pillowy pillow of my pallet
        pillowy pillow of my sleeping spot
        I, animal, sat down.
        Seven-faced smokehole god
        Seven-faced,
135   my father arrived.
        As enraged as he was just now,
        he is even more enraged.
        His hollow quiver loaded with a hundred arrows
        he threw it down.
140   the roof of the roofed house
        shook
        the low (?) house
        its lower portion shook.
        "My dear son, my dear son, (I, he says:)
145   knee-deep surfaced land
        foot-deep surfaced land
        you have not even the strength for it."

By the second day, night approaching dawn
for his iron (?) broken much ice-breaking iron[20]
150   he gathered much of it,
pierced-through[21] many cauldrons
he gathered;
arched cradle of arched iron
he had it made,
155   arched cradle of arched copper
he had it made[22] (?),
seven ends of a little chain
he had them made.
for the cost of *śŏpər* silver
160   for the cost of *kamə* silver
(he) God bought it.
Well, indeed[23]
that they spent the night, who knows,
that they spent the day, who saw?
165   "Well, well, my dear son, my dear son,
the arched cradle of arched iron
get into it,
into the arched cradle of arched copper
get into it!
170   To the colorful landscape of the lower world
I will lower you,
to the old[24] (?) landscape of the lower world

---

[20] According to the informant, *lɔm = pŏrt'ə* 'ice-breaking iron'. It is likely, however, that the entire sentence is a misunderstanding of a somewhat different formula; see the Mansi *ku̇'mɛ saɣßa'lum ßāt lù̇ᶙmǡs a'tɔ̂s / māŋwɕßɛ saɣßa'lum ßāt l' ạ̇ŋuɣßi a'tɔ̂s* 'sammelte dreissig Eisstangen, an denen die Vertiefung (im Oberende zur Befestigung des Schaftes) durchgebrochen war / sammelte dreissig (schlechte) Beile, deren Hammer abgebrochen war / sammelte dreissig (schlechte) Beile, deren Hammer abgebrochen war' (MSFOu 114: 141).

[21] Explanation: *wŭseŋ pŭt* 'leaky cauldron'. It is possible that the singer uses the expression to refer to the cauldron as a result of reinterpreting the third-person singular possessive form of *muŋχ* 'Rücken der Axtklinge' (DEWO 901) as the verbal prefix *muχtə* 'across, through'.

[22] 'у кузнецов заказал' (??)

[23] A frequent filler word in Smolin's songs: "one can sing it in any song, as many times as one likes – it doesn't mean anything." The second half of the line is incomprehensible to me and also appears in other songs in the form *ănta, ăntašiɣə*.

[24] *jetəŋ = jĭsəŋ, nuptəŋ* 'old' < ? Š *jĭt* 'Gelenk, Zeitabschnitt, Zeitraum, den e. Erscheinung dauert' > Northern Mansi folklore *jätiŋ* (DEWO 418), reborrowed form from Mansi.

I will lower you."
Into the arched cradle of arched iron
175   he got into it.
but afterwards
(of) three girls, the smallest girl
she jumped onto his back.
"To the colorful landscape of our father's lower world
180   I'm going, too!"
To the distance between two (bodies of) water
to the distance between two lands[25]
lo, he (God) lowered them.
(One) fleshly week they hang,
185   six bony (days) they hang.
Their starving hearts,
their freezing bodies
they are freezing.[26]
"Upper sky (god) father, well, well,
190   sable (fur) big beautiful[27] (?) prayer
we offer to you:
at the dear end of the iron chain
would you either pick (us) up,
(or) if you would lower (us), then lower (us)
195   to the colorful landscape of the lower world
to the multicolored landscape of the lower world!
We are withering into withered flesh,
we are withering into withered bone!"
He does not pay even a little attention,
200   he does not pay even a lot of attention.[28]
Their starving hearts

It is not semantically appropriate for this sentence. Perhaps the use of this word was influenced by the similar-sounding Šerkal word *jeləŋ, jelaŋ* 'holy', which is used as a fixed epithet modifying *jĭŋk* 'water, landscape, countryside'.

[25] That is, between the upper and lower worlds. The word *jĭŋk* can also be translated as 'landscape, countryside'.

[26] The more complete version of the formula is "their starving hearts are starving / their freezing bodies are freezing." Smolin consistently leaves off the first element of the verbal parallelism.

[27] < Mansi *ūliŋ* 'cheerful, beautiful, delightful'. The equivalent Khanty expression typically appears as *răχə pɔjək* 'a pleasing, appropriate prayer'.

[28] This expression cannot be translated literally. Its complete form is *aj/un uχ tăχəŋa (? tăχeŋa) ăn wŭtat.*

their freezing bodies
they are very much freezing.
Their shrunken bones
205   they are very much shrinking them
their shrunken furs (?)
they are very much shrinking them.
Sable (fur) big beautiful (?) prayer
they offer it again:
"Seven-faced, smokehole god,
if only you would pick us up!
Our shrunken bones
you surely have shrunken them,
our shrunken skin
215   you have withered it.
To the colorful landscape of the lower world
if you lower (us), do lower (us),
at the dear end of the iron chain
if you pick (us) up,
220   do pick (us) up!"
It took no length of time,
the rattling noise of the iron chain
sounded, lo;
to the colorful landscape of the lower world
225   to the multicolored landscape of the lower world
we are being lowered.
ĭjəγə– ĭjəγə,
the swampy animal little son
his withered little bones
230   his withered little flesh
it was most withered.
The upper sky (god) dear mother
the upper heaven (god) dear mother;[29]
emerged on its own a diving bird's nest (on a hummock),

---

[29] That is, the goddess Kalteś. According to Smolin, the god *turəm* has three daughters: *kăttəś ăŋkə* 'mother Kalteś', *kasəm naj* 'Lady of Kazym', and the third is unknown to him. There is no connection between the first bear to descend from heaven and *kŭnšəŋ ɔjka* or *jem-wɔš ɔjka* 'Clawed Elder', 'Sacred Town Elder (Vežakary)', the idol spirit who takes the form of a bear. In Šerkal folklore, the latter often appears as the brother of Kalteś and the uncle of *ĭmə χĭtə* 'the Old Woman's Nephew'.

235   floating hummock of the diving bird's nest,
        onto the edge of the floating hummock[30]
        lo, she settled down.
        The one holding her grabbed an arrow,
        grabbed an arrow from many sons[31]
240   her good blood sacrifice requested in the evening
        did not last until morning,
        her good blood sacrifice requested in the morning
        did not last until evening.
        As the midnight blood-sacrifice Lady
245   as the midnight food-sacrifice Lady[32]
        lives there.
        The swampy animal little boy (too)
        was lowered, behold,
        touched down, behold.
250   He trips over one mossy hummock,
        he falls onto his stomach,
        he trips over the other mossy hummock,
        he falls aside.
        He does not have knee strength,
255   he does not have leg strength.
        Meanwhile
        how I think:
        "in the colorful landscape of the lower world
        in the multicolored landscape of the lower world
260   from one mossy hummock to another mossy hummock
        I, animal, trip,
        I fall onto my stomach."
        I, animal, (just) take steps,
        I, animal, (just) walk on.

---

[30] The name used in folklore (*kăttaś kurt*) for the holy place of the goddess Kalteś, near the village of Kaltysʹjany.

[31] The people praying to her *(tŭwet pɔjəkśtə jɔχ)*. Kalteś was revered by the entire western Ob-Ugric population as the main goddess, who determined the number and lifespan of children, and people traveled from distant lands to Kaltysʹjany to offer sacrifices to her. The goddess's own clan *(pŭťaŋ jɔχət* 'her true people') are the Kaltysʹjany Liskovs (*mɔś* moiety, *ńurmen mĭγ, χŏmsen mĭγ sĭraŋ jɔχ* 'swampy land, clan of the grassy land people').

[32] One of the many names in folklore for the goddess Kalteś.

265   My knee strength has run out,
       my leg strength has run out.
       If I find an icy corpse,
       swampy animal with eight claws
       I will throw it up then,
270   if I find a frozen corpse,
       swampy animal with eight claws
       I will throw it up then.
       My starving heart
       is very much starving,
275   my freezing body
       is very much blown by the wind.
       Meanwhile
       animal-made tangled(-grassy)[33] trail
       animal-made winding trail
280   do I, animal, make.
       Wide-leaved[34] much grass
       he ordered much of it,
       wide-leaved much sedge
       he (God) ordered much of it (to be there).

---

[33] Nizjam *lăməś* 'im Wind auf dem Wasser schwimmende Hälmchen, Reiser; verwestes Gras, das sich an den Netzen festsetzt' – for the given formula, Steinitz suggests the translation 'der mit Abfall, mit Kehricht bedeckte Weg' and he criticizes Pápay's translation 'unkempt' (DEWO 835). Smolin's explanation: *tŏrnəŋ tăχajnə mănət, tŏrnət pajtija ńɔrəttajət* 'he walks in a grassy place, and the grasses get flattened' – he then described how in the bear's wake, the tall grasses become disheveled, upright in some places and squashed to the ground in others. The adjective is interpreted in two different ways, in relation to the meanings of the main noun: based on the meaning 'debris' in the version reported by Steinitz, in which the parallel term *tăprəŋ* 'trash' also occurs, and based on the meaning 'grass caught in a net' in the version 'squashed down, tangled grass'. It is possible that Pápay's informant explained it as "like matted, shaggy fur", which Pápay then translated into Hungarian as the more similar-sounding *lompos* 'unkempt'.

[34] *lɔw tĭjpə pum* = *tɔwijnə tĭγtə wŭtəŋ pum* 'growing in springtime, wide grass.' The bottom part of its blades are wide; this is called *(pum) lɔw tăχet* or *wŭtəŋ tăχet* 'the wide part (of the grass)'. The upper portion, which grows narrower, is called *(pum) lɔmpasəŋ tăχet* 'the oar-like part (of the grass)'. If a Šerkal word *lɔw* meaning 'wide' does in fact exist, the bear song formula *lɔwijen pɔ̄ŋᵉχtap ńŭrəm ūnᵉt wɔj* 'das Sumpf- Waldtier mit mächtigen (?) Schulterblatt' (OVE 1: 318) can be more easily explained than Steinitz's suggestion of the archaic form of the northern *lɔw* 'Pferd' (OVE 2: 269).

285   With my starving heart[35]
       with my freezing body
       wide-leaved much grass
       I gather much of it,
       wide-leaved much sedge
290   I gather much of it.
       The colorful landscape of the lower world
       the multicolored landscape of the lower world
       when I was looking at it last time:
       land rich in thin baize
295   land rich in thin silk;
       (and) now, well, well,
       leg-deep, surfaced land
       leg-deep, surfaced mossy hummocked land!
       From one mossy hummock I stumble,
300   I fall to the other place,
       off the other mossy hummock I fall,
       I fall aside.
       Wide-leaved much grass
       I gather much of it.
305   Once I feel it, I feel it:
       my starving heart
       has almost calmed down,
       has almost subsided[36].
       Meanwhile
310   seven-faced smokehole god,
       my father the smokehole god, though,
       in the pine forest little many berries[37]
       many of them did he enchant (conjure there),
       in the wooded ridge little many berries
315   many of them did he enchant (conjure there);
       in the wooded ridge many berries
       thus grew ripe.

---

[35] Due to the lack of a case suffix, it is unclear whether this is in instrumental or partitive case.

[36] The Mansi word *pōjti* 'cease, stop' has the same meaning as its Khanty parallel term. This type of bilingual parallelism cannot be translated.

[37] Any berry that grows in a pine forest. It has no connection to the Nizjam compound word *jɔχəm-ut'* (DEWO 344) 'lingonberry'.

From his insatiable "my little (birch-bark) basket"[38] mouth
I, animal, remember,
320   from his insatiable "my little (birch-bark) bowl" mouth
I, animal, remember.
A thick "fluid"[39] the thickness of a span
do I, animal, grow.
I, animal, survey:
325   I can feel that my back has grown strong,
I can feel that my chest has grown strong.
A hundred forest winding paths
do I, animal, make,
do I, animal, create.
330   In the pine forest many berries
many of them do I collect,
in the wooded ridge many berries
many of them do I gather.
From his insatiable "my little (birch-bark) basket" mouth
335   from his insatiable "my little (birch-bark) bowl" mouth
did I, animal, fill up.
I move my back:
my back (only thus) resounds,[40]
I move my chest:
340   my chest (only thus) resounds.
Seven-faced smokehole god
smokehole god of six smokeholes,
short day approaching fall
did God create,
345   short day approaching winter
did God create;
eggshell-thin ice
it froze thus,
eggshell-thin good ice
350   it froze thus indeed.
A tangled(-grassy) trail, treaded on by an animal,
a winding trail, treaded on by an animal,

---

[38] Taboo-based euphemism for the bear's stomach, in which it "collects" – i.e., eats. Line 320 features bilingual parallelism with Khanty *sɔwt* and Mansi *sɔ̄wt* 'birch-bark container'.

[39] Taboo-based euphemism for bear fat.

[40] The way fat shakes on its back.

do I, animal, make.
An impenetrable wooded ridge (suitable) for an animal to sleep
355   I, animal, search for,
a wooded ridge (suitable) for an animal to sleep
I, animal, search for.
Meanwhile
an autumn of thin snow (for) dog feet
360   does God create,
an autumn of thin snow (for) human feet
does he thus create;
light snow (the thinness of) squirrel fur
it fell thus.
365   Densely wooded ridge of trees
densely wooded forest of trees
I, animal, searched for.
For five (units of) time a male animal (could last with a breath)[41]
I threw (the earth),
370   for four (units of) time a female animal (could last with a breath)
[I threw (the earth)];
roof-beamed house of earth roof beams
was completed thus,
poled house of earth poles
375   was completed thus.
Four fathoms of moss
did I, animal, bring inside,
four fathoms of rosemary
did I, animal, bring inside.
380   My roof-beamed house of earth roof beams
(for me), animal, has been completed.
My nest rich in thin baize
I, animal, spread it out.
Meanwhile
385   at the bottom of a deep[42] dream
I, animal, sleep.
With one half of my thought

---

[41] There is very little air underground as the bear is digging to hollow out its den, so it occasionally comes up to the surface for fresh air.

[42] Actually 'thick'.

how I think:
to the happy[43] space of a womanly oath
390   I, animal, think,
to the happy space of a manly oath
with one half of my ear
I, animal, listen.
Meanwhile
395   with the other half of my thought
the happy corner of a deep dream
I, animal, chase it.
Eight-month winter of months
I, animal, sleep through it,
400   eight-month winter of months
I, animal, sleep through it.
Long winter of ice pellets
long winter of snow pellets
then the animal sleeps through it.
405   In the corner of my openingless house
in the nook of my openingless house
I sit through the winter.[44]
Then the baby-faced[45] epochal world,
during the time of the epochal world's creation
410   the borne-of-me
clan of mine, though,
should not go (outside) during the winter!
A roof-beamed house of earth roof beams
they should build,
415   a roofed house of earth roof
they should build!
The song thus ends,
the story thus ends.

---

[43] < Mansi *sɔ̄təŋ* 'lucky, happy'.

[44] It is unclear whether the word *tăt* is an abbreviated form of *tătə* 'winter' or *tăta* 'here'. The translation 'I sit or reside here' is also possible.

[45] At the dawn of the human era. *χăntet – śĭt turəm akańət* 'the Khanty (that is, humankind in general) – God's babies' – which God plays with.

Musical Analysis of the Song (Lajos Huszár)

Structure:

At the beginning of the song, two three-line stanzas with AAB structures can be heard. Strangely, in what follows, the B section does not appear again, and the A section is repeated continuously. This raises the question of whether the two-line stanzas that appear later should be considered a continuation of the series or the repetition of separate, independent lines.

Melody and pitch set:

The inferred invariant of the A section:

The melody variations can be categorized into two types: (1) "microvariants," through which the trichord gradually changes; (2) "macrovariants," which enrich the sound set but do not cause any variation beyond slight modifications to the melody.

1. The melody uses a three-part pitch set. This is mostly a "do-re-mi" trichord, although it undergoes a unique transformation. The singer does not sing cleanly, at least not in the European sense of clean, tempered vocals. In this way, the intervals between individual notes gradually ascend and descend. Especially in the case of "do," there is little obstacle, since this note occurs only once, on the unaccented beat and second note of a two-part melisma. Produced this way, the "reduced" nature of the "do" encourages the pitch to become indeterminate and occasionally drop nearly or completely to "ti." The overintonation of "mi" likely results from the fact that for the singer, it is not distance from the major second that is the point but rather the higher pitch of the second note relative to the first, the upward motion (the latter perhaps also indicates the ascending melisma that occurs on the first quarter). The original(?) "do-re-mi" trichord therefore transforms into a "ti-re-mi" tritone in the first case and "do-re-fa" tritone in the second. This change between notes happens gradually across multiple melodic phrases, in an ascending or descending direction, one microinterval at a time, imperceptibly to the ear. The ones so far apply to the A melodic phrase.

In the B melodic phrase, which occurs only twice in total, the pitch set is enriched with the note "ti." This "ti" is not the same as the underintoned "do" of the A melodic phrase, because here the "ti" and "do" both appear, both of them as full independent notes.

2. The macrovariants can be grouped into two types:

a) The changes associated with melisma and the variation in syllable count, which do not affect the substance of the melody and can instead be considered quantitative variations. For example, on the beat of the first primary accent, variations including the following can be found:

b) The other type of variation cannot be attributed to poetic or linguistic factors and is purely musical in nature. This type occurs randomly in certain melodic phrases, such as on the beat of the first primary accent:

Rhythm and meter:

The melody consists of two 4/4 measures and therefore eight quarter notes in total; the primary accent is on the first and fifth notes, and the secondary accent falls on the third and seventh notes. According to Ob-Ugric folk music tradition, only some of these accented elements contain two syllables each. The variability gradually decreases on the half notes that fall on the two primary accents, with the first one receiving more emphasis than the second. An extreme example of this is in line 210, where five syllables fall on the first half note. The half notes of the secondary accent have either no variability, and therefore are two syllables, or are variable in a descending direction towards the second half of the song, as the tempo speeds up: a single syllable falls on the half note, therefore creating melisma or occasionally rhythmic and melodic simplification.

The Poetic Features of Song (Éva Schmidt)

Metrical analysis:

Ob-Ugric verse is accentual but not syllabic. When it is sung, the stressed elements clearly stand out. The relationship between musical accents and linguistic stress differs slightly based on dialect, genre, and style of performance. Middle Ob songs of all genres (with the exception of shaman songs, where the lack of sufficient data means we cannot make a determination) are characterized by their regular, European-like rhythmic structure and the dominant role of musical accents. The present song is, in Steinitz's terminology, a "vierfüssige Verse." It is made up of lines containing four accents, in which the primary stress falls on the first and third accent, and the secondary stress falls on the second and fourth.

According to the basic rule of nominal lines, primary stress can fall on only the first syllable, and this rule overrides all other linguistic rules regarding the "transfer" of stress. It is secondary stress that is more strongly influenced by musical accents, falling in places not justified either linguistically or poetically. Thus, in the lines following the meter 2(3) | 2 || 2(3) | 2, one is likely to first hear the -ə sound as an adjectivizer rather than a filler sound, since Šerkal metrical rules do not favor placing a filler sound in a stressed position, but the song does not contain two syllables' worth of filler anywhere else. The second primary stress of the "metrical" verbal lines (containing three stressed elements in the verb portion) regularly falls on a defined syllable of the -*iɣi·jət*- verbalizer used in the language of song. The first secondary stress, which according to the rules should fall on the first syllable of the verb (this is the main evidence of the metrical function of secondary stress) appears in the present song one syllable later. This irregularity is not a unique occurrence; in the songs I have analyzed, I have found several more such examples. The most obvious explanation for this phenomenon is that the prosody of the song is irregular with respect to secondary stress, but the root of the problem can be found in the differences between primary and secondary stress, in terms of their nature and metrical functions.

The variability of syllable count is unusual, perhaps even reminiscent of the two types of melodic variability. The stressed quarter lines have their own unique tendency toward variability. Syllable addition is characteristic of quarter lines with primary stress, especially the first; quarter lines with secondary stress are less variable and have a decreasing number of syllables.

The song begins with a slow tempo and the meter 2(3) | 2 ‖ 2(3) | 2 is dominant. By around line 70, the tempo begins to speed up, and expanding the variable tendencies of the secondary quarter lines, the meter gradually shifts to a 2(3) | 1 ‖ 2 | 1 pattern. This type of metrical shift is as rare in Šerkal songs as the trichord-tritone shift of the melody.

The role of filler syllables is to ensure that the subsequent accent falls in the correct place. In filler syllables and certain suffixes, -*a* and -*ə* can be considered variants.

Ob-Ugric verse is "phonetic-level," but there is a very strict rule that two vowels cannot appear next to each other. In the Šerkal dialect, typically the sound *γ* (~ *χ*), and less frequently *j* or *w*, is inserted between a word-final vowel and a word-initial vowel (even across lines). In transcription, this type of linking consonant is added to the end of the first word, even though it is almost always pronounced as the beginning of the second word (even at the beginning of a line!). I have placed these consonants above the line, within parentheses.

Stylistic elements:

Though not all of them are analyzed here, this song demonstrates all the features that are characteristic of Khanty songs. Smolin's performance style, however, includes two rare stylistic devices that are worth paying attention to, both of which are subtypes of parallelism.

In "bilingual parallelism," the second of the variable parallel words is not Khanty but Mansi (and very rarely Russian). These words are either semantically identical to Khanty or differ in several features, as if they were derived from the second element of a Mansi parallelism. The frequent use of this stylistic element naturally presupposes familiarity with the Mansi language and Mansi folklore. Such phenomena support the hypothesis that in addition to the similarity in spiritual culture and folk poetry (and its characteristic parallelism), the bilingualism of some groups has also played an important role in the development of such frequent linguistic borrowing within the northern Ob-Ugric cultic and folklore language.

The second interesting feature is "suffix parallelism." This affects words that are not supposed to vary. The root remains the same, but the suffix, or a part of it, turns into a suffix belonging to the same category but differing in some feature. In Smolin's style, the "metrical" verbal lines that already play a more passive role are typical locations of suffix parallelism. Actual Ob-Ugric parallelism is based on the variation of elements in identical syntactic

surface structures, based on set semantic rules, and any variation that affects syntactic relations in even the slightest way has an apoetical effect. Thus, the potential for suffix variation is limited; its poetic function is on the level of stylistic elements.

In Smolin's songs, the use of the formal (poetic) subject often makes it difficult to interpret predicate structures. The predicate of the "metrical" verbal lines in these cases shows agreement not with the word directly preceding it in subject position but instead with an earlier subject, which is in a possessive construction with the formal subject. The latter can be translated using a dative construction or skipped entirely.

(English translation by Melinda Széll)

Folklore Studies

Trends in 20th Century Ob-Ugric Oral Tradition (1981)

1. The problem of the "private songs"

A scholar travelling to North-Western Siberia these days is not likely to recognize the places described by 19th century authors. After decades of laying the foundations of socialism, this waste and remote territory has become the scene of a petroleum revolution. Since then, the intensive industrialization has resulted in fundamental changes in the social structure and culture of the population. "Lives and manners are changing extremely quickly" – this is probably the only generalized opinion one can offer about present-day Western Siberia.

An old woman sings a song about her son while cleaning fish by the riverside. Some hundred miles away, her son sits in a new flat and watches the news about the world football championship on Moscow Central TV. Is he able to sing a song about his mother?

2.1. The material

It is very difficult, if not impossible, to form at a distance a correct opinion about the folk poetry of a people undergoing intensive cultural change. Yet we have a stock of ca. 90 Ob-Ugric song texts, from which some conclusions may be drawn. They have all been recorded from students of the Herzen College of Education, Leningrad (especially in the Department of Northern Peoples). Instead of representing all of Ob-Ugric folk poetry today, these texts reflect only the subculture of young, educated people. Their particularity lies in the fact that, being reproduced and partly produced by the most developed, bilingual and bicultural layer of society, they reflect most clearly new trends.[1]

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[1] Editions used as sources: Steinitz 1939, 1941. Kálmán 1976. Rédei 1968. There are about a dozen scattered records in linguistic periodicals. I have also used some Siberian

2.2. About the informants

The informants had usually grown up at boarding schools in the nearest district centre, and then gone to high schools in Khanty-Mansijsk or other towns. They had spent their summer holidays in their native villages. Many of them had worked for a few years before entering the Leningrad college. Nowadays only a few of the graduate students return to their villages, and the majority find work in central settlements.

Their repertoire of Ob-Ugric songs falls into the following categories by origin:
1. Children's folklore from their native villages
2. Songs learnt from relatives and acquaintances during holidays – these show the features and style of particular regional ethnographic groups (e.g., the Ostyaks of the Kazym region, or the Voguls of the Sos′va region). This is usually the basic stock
3. Songs learnt from schoolmates; a mixed stock of a few pieces
4. A few songs taught at schools or "culture centres" as feast performances (groups 3 and 4 often coincide)
5. Songs broadcast by radio and performances by folk groups
6. Self-composed songs

Unfortunately, in the published literature, this information about the origin of the songs is often missing.

An unusually high percentage of the boys play some musical instrument (balalaika, or accordion), and many of them have written some poetry.

3.1. A historical survey 1920–1978

The new economic, social and cultural changes are not rooted in the organic, spontaneous development of the Ob-Ugric peoples, but are local realizations of the USSR's overall plans, resulting in a manifold interaction between Russian and native societies. In order to study their impact on oral tradition, it is necessary to make a brief survey of the social and cultural circumstances.

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local editions, the most important of them being Сборник мансийских народных песен и танцев. Ханты-Мансийск [Collection of Mansi folk songs and dances. Khanty-Mansijsk] 1958, and my own Ostyakian material recorded in Leningrad and Khanty-Mansijsk in 1970–71. The method of analysis is based on Voigt 1972.

By now the Ob-Ugric peoples have a fully collectivized, complex economy. The loss of manpower due to World War II, and the use of more intensive technological methods, brought about the reorganization of the settlement system. Small, temporarily inhabited villages were consolidated into bigger, well-installed settlements. Since the mid-60s a considerable number of new towns have been built to support oil production. Industry badly needs manpower, and thousands of immigrants settle every year. All this has resulted in fundamental changes in the composition by nationalities, with the native Ob-Ugric peoples forming a decreasing percentage of the inhabitants of their own national district. All along the great rivers (Ob, Konda) the population is mixed, and pure ethnic settlements can be found mainly along the middle and upper sections of the tributaries. All kinds of nationalities are being assimilated into a local variant of Russian culture, thus forming a new Western Siberian culture-area.

The central and local authorities attempt to prevent alienation as much as possible. The existence of masses of rootless migrant workers in search of higher wages is incompatible with socialism. The social administration tries to settle immigrants by providing them with a home, and encouraging their human relations, common culture and high self-esteem. This new culture consists of information, norms and behaviour patterns that fit socialist aims, the local circumstances – and are easily acquirable. Acculturation is supported by modern social administration and the mass media. Success is considerable, and a good worker of any nationality who has spent 10 years in Western Siberia becomes as enthusiastic a local patriot as a born Siberian. He loves the countryside, takes an interest in social problems, and would not leave his new homeland. While in the past Siberian natives were not even considered as human beings, and Russian settlers were regarded ambivalently, now "Severjane" ("northerners; inhabitants of Northern Siberia in general") are among the most highly esteemed citizens of the USSR.[2]

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[2]   Social changes are most clearly reflected in professional literature, especially in short stories by natives published in local papers and almanacs. Their themes and heroes change according to historical periods, though there are some "timeless" themes too, e.g., the heroic fulfillment of plans of production. Civil war themes are of less importance than in Russian literature, but since the 30s economic and social reshaping have been equally emphasized. The main hero, immigrant or native, is a kind of a social organizer who turns against the traditions, defeats the rich, the shamans and the passive resistance of the people. He is a founder of socialism. Surprisingly enough, World War II brought about woman and child heroes who took over the work of menfolk in the hinterland. It is a pity that there is no significant literature about Vogul and Ostyak soldiers. They served as crack shots and scouts; out of 100 men hardly a dozen survived. Heroes from the late 50s on are of the organizer type, but instead of sharp social conflicts they strive to get

3.2. The songs of the "new culture"

The "new culture" has its own songs that are generally known and sung at any celebration. It makes no difference whether it is a national feast, a birthday or a farewell party. This stock of songs falls into the following groups:

1. Songs common to all citizens of the USSR or of the Russian Federal Republic:
   a) songs learnt obligatorily at schools, in the army, etc. These are usually patriotic or rallying songs and a few Russian folksongs
   b) songs learnt by individual choice: popular hits

2. Songs of a local character, partly taught at schools, partly learnt individually. As far as I know, there is no scholarly literature of them, so I am compelled to group them according to my experiences. Characteristic thematic groups seem to be:
   a.) lyrical songs about Siberian places and countryside (e.g., "Above the Konda River", or "Night Waves on the Ob River")
   b) lyrical songs about important towns and settlements (e.g., "Our Northern Town", "Small Town" – both about Khanty-Mansijsk; "The Clouds Go to Surgut", "Come to Neftejugansk", etc.)
   c) songs attached to certain professions (e.g., "The Oil-Kings", "Because I am a geologist", "We Build a Town", etc.)
   d) agitative songs of a political character and a few *častuška*s of the same type.

All the types mentioned above aim at the self-identification of local, professional or other social groups. The majority of these songs have nothing to do with folksongs except insofar as they are orally transmitted. They are composed by professional authors, and the themes are taken from recent poetry. Their importance lies in the fact that they serve as patterns for the whole population, including ethnic minorities. Moreover, people are encouraged to compose songs on the themes mentioned above, and pieces fitting the pattern are given a wide publicity.

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the plans of production fulfilled. Another theme is the experience of encountering new things like a motor boat, electricity, radio or movies. Since the mid-60s the most popular hero has been an immigrant geologist who risks his life to discover oil resources. By now he is gradually changing into an oil-field worker who successfully fulfills the plans and finds his home in Siberia.

3.3. Possibilities of development in oral tradition

In spite of the industrialization and social changes, a Western-type decline of oral tradition as a whole is not probable in Western Siberia. On the one hand, this is due to the fact that the social and cultural reshaping follows the patterns of an organic society. On the other hand, it is a lucky coincidence that all the main ethnic groups have a tradition of improvised genres, providing the survival of "living folk poetry" (Russian *častuška*, and Vogul, Ostyak and Nenets improvised songs). It is rather the system of genres that is changing, favouring genres adapted to the depiction of contemporary reality and to literary ones. The most popular thematic groups tend to become independent genres, while some of the traditional genres appear as thematic groups.

4.1. The interrelation between tradition and new trends

In the case of ethnic minorities like the Ob-Ugric peoples, new trends and traditional folk poetry are interdependent and equally important factors of development. Oral tradition has a twofold function: 1. It is the medium of artistic transmission; 2. It is a filter ensuring identity and organic development. In the first function it provides patterns for genres, themes, structures of composition, phrases and style. New patterns are productive only if they can be identified with traditional ones in more than one of these respects. Songs composed recently are easy to distinguish from old ones. They may differ in theme (e.g., the new life), structure (lack of opening and closing formulae, strophic structure, inorganic refrain, etc.) or in style (lack of parallelisms), but not in all at the same time. On the other hand, they cannot be identified with Russian songs, even when some of the words closely resemble those of the *častuška*s. The *častuška* is a four-line recited piece improvised in immediate social themes, reflecting the norms of a social group (thus it may be agitative, mocking, etc.). Lacking in the tradition of such recited genres, the Ob-Ugric peoples use longer, sung versions of the same theme and function. When compared to Russian compositions, it is usually the thematic resemblance which is the most apparent, while phraseologic and stylistic resemblance are the least so. These facts show that the Ob-Ugric oral tradition is productive and will probably remain so for as long as the Vogul and Ostyak languages are spoken.

4.2. A survey of the classification of the Ob-Ugric oral tradition

Considering only the factors that have determined recent development, northern Ob-Ugric oral tradition can be analysed in terms of the following distinctive features:

I. Distinctive features of the sender (author)
1. collective (unknown) (+) vs private (–)
2. if private, the author's intention for transmission (+) vs not for transmission (–)
II. Distinctive features of the code
3. function: supranormal (+) vs normal (–)
4. the form of codification: verse (song) (+) vs prose (–)[3]
III. Distinctive features of the message
5. non-epic (+) vs epic (–)[4]
6. dramatic (+) vs non-dramatic (–)
7. objective (+) vs subjective (–)[5]

The least marked genre in these terms is: 1–7 (–), i.e., "memorate"; in fact, this does exist, has no proper term in Ob-Ugric languages and is not even

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[3] It is problematic to determine which is the marked feature. If everyday communication is taken into account then versed songs would be undoubtedly (+) marked. Within oral tradition it is rather the prosaic genres that correspond to the criteria of markedness. They are fewer in number, have fewer sub-sections and carry considerably more (+) marks in all other respects. The question is whether prosaic genres that are not considered to belong to oral tradition by the Ob-Ugrians themselves, and consequently have no terms, are to be taken into account or not. As I consider them as a part of oral tradition, a (+) mark for songs is justified, although this causes contradictions in some respects.

[4] I use the term "epic" in the sense of "a minimum of an epic pattern"; i.e., a change of situation caused by the interaction of at least two persons of different functions. With the exception of some dramatic children's genres, all prosaic genres belong to this type. Heroic sagas and bear-songs are versed epic genres but many bear-feast performances of idols, dance songs and private songs do not fit this pattern. They are narrative but not purely epic. It is not clear for me either which feature is to be considered as a marked one. "Non-epic" is marked (+) only because the majority of the genres have an epic subject, although actually the number of "non-epic" songs may be higher. In case of a tribal oral tradition, the classic trinity of lyric–drama–epic is quite problematic to apply.

[5] Features number 6 and 7 are in complementary distribution in most of the cases, so feature number 7 might be omitted. Yet in some respects this opposition is quite characteristic: e.g., "heroic saga": 6 (+), 7 (–) – "epic private song of a man": 6 (–), 7 (–). I use feature number 7 only for the sake of comparison with European genres. In other cases it is not needed because the opposition is always expressed by feature number 1 and 3.

considered to be a genre of oral tradition in scholarly literature. On the other hand, the most marked genres: 1–6 (+); 7 (–), an "invocative hymn", or "prayer to gods and idols", are very peculiar: they are only performed with certain rituals by a certain person (a shaman) and not everybody is supposed to listen to them.

The basic category of songs seems to be a 1 (–); 2 (±); 3 (–); 4 (+); 5 (±); 6–7 (–) song. This is generally what is meant by the Vog. N. *ēriɣ*, or Osty. N. *ārə* 'song', although special terms also exist, like Osty. Kaz. *ɛkšańśəp* '... gewöhnliches Lied, ostjakisches Lied'[6] (this may be related to Vog. N. *ūlilap* [7]) and Vog. *måńsi ɛriɣ* 'wogulisches Lied'.[8] The fact that in the terminology of genres this kind of song is associated with the ethnic group proves its typical character. It was termed *sorsének* by Munkácsi, later translated into Finnish as *kohtalolaulu* and German as *Schicksalslied*. The Ob-Ugric peoples divide this category into men's and women's songs.

As this is a basic category, the pattern of the songs has a remarkable influence on all kinds of songs and on their development. Before going into details, some problems of the category itself will have to be discussed.

4.3.1. Distinctive feature 1 (–): "private"

The author of the song is known. It is also connected with feature 7 (–) "subjective". This latter feature is partly expressed by the grammatical form: 3rd-person forms, usually objective (e.g., nearly all prosaic genres). Such formal criteria, however, do not work in all cases; they are logically connected, but not identical with feature 7. Third-person songs can also be private (improvisations), while 1st-person songs may have had collective authorship (most of the supranormal epic genres).

"Private songs" usually have the structure: "opening formula – theme – closing formula", where the theme may be in any grammatical form, while the opening and closing formulae are in the 1st person singular, emphasising their "subjective" character. In most cases, the author and the theme coincide so that the song is in the 1st person all the way through. This may be considered as the archetype of the Ob-Ugric song, and all other types as being derived from it. Supranormal (cultic) songs of collective authorship demand feature 6 (+), "dramatic", using the performer as the mouthpiece for supernatural beings (heroic saga, shaman's songs, or bear songs). In dialogue-like situations,

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6   K-T 31. A very good definition can be found in DEWOS, 38.
7   Schmidt 1976.
8   MSFOu 134: 7.

whether dramatic or not, the 1st person singular is transformed into a 2nd-person form (supranormal genres: invocative hymns, prayers to gods or idols; normal genres: love songs, dance songs, laments). The existence of 3rd-person heroic sagas among Voguls is partly due to the fact that if several heroes (idols) are named in the title, the main hero cannot tell the story on behalf of the others.[9] In other cases such pieces seem to be newly derived variants that lack the typical poetic forms of songs. The mythic and cosmogonic sagas may be analogic derivatives of prosaic myths, influenced by the overwhelming mass of versed cultic genres. This homogeneity of Ob-Ugric songs has also been commented on by B. Kálmán and other authors.[10]

The feature "private" may equally well be expressed by the terms "attached to a certain person", or "privately owned". The advantage of using these would be that they reflect the opinion of Ob-Ugrians, but since they are the product of everyday consciousness, it is problematic to work with them in a scientific description. Possessive constructions with a proper name and a word like "songs", "saga", or "tale" do not indicate whether the relation of the elements is active or passive, so that the sender, topic and receiver are expressed in the same way,[11] hardly being differentiated even when a detailed title expresses the syntactic relations properly. Probably influenced by the informants, Munkácsi grouped songs composed by women as well as songs composed by men to or about women under the title "Women's songs".

The main point is that nearly all songs are attached to at least one particular person, usually to the author – consequently the theme of an Ob-Ugric song should stem from the experiences of this person. This is the most important difference between Ob-Ugric songs and European folksongs.[12]

4.3.2. Distinctive feature 2 and the problem of improvisations

Feature number 2 (+) "for transmission", requires a relatively fixed text. Some of the "private" songs, usually referred to as improvisations, do not however meet this requirement. The question is how they are related to the "Schicksalslied" type of songs mentioned above.

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[9] E.g., VNGy II/1: 52–75, 205–221.

[10] VNGy IV/2: 18, 24.

[11] This refers to the shorter form of the titles, e.g., *mān mārja ēriɣ* 'The Song of Little Mary' (composed by her) (WogT 84); *sāń ēriɣ* 'The Song of (my) Mother' (about her) (WogT 102); *Polem-t̥ārem kastulä* 'The Hymn of P.-t.' (to him) (VNGy II/2: 104). In more detailed titles with participial constructions the relation of the elements is differentiated.

[12] VNGy I: L. VNGy IV/2: 24–25, 35.

All improvised songs are private, but not all "private" songs are improvised in the strict sense of the word. The texts published so far, and my experience in fieldwork,[13] show that the "Schicksalslied" type of song has a fairly fixed text and is learnt like any piece of oral tradition. It is probably somewhat more variable than European folksongs, especially while the author, who has the right to change the words, is alive. The first performance of such songs might be called an improvisation but authors seem to work out their "own" songs gradually and very carefully; after all, these songs are intended to show their skill and to perpetuate their names. While looking for the best solutions, they do not change the text more than a variant is supposed to change, i.e. adding or omitting a few lines and changing synonymous expressions. At the end of this process the text will have a fixed structure with some variable elements, like European folksongs. For the sake of brevity, I shall refer to such songs as "stable private song". It cannot be characterized as "traditional" (in terms of the text) but marking a feature "improvised" would not be correct either, especially in a system of genres where there are pure improvisations too.

Improvisations may differ from stable private songs in many respects (theme, structure, etc.) but above all in the intention of the author. As far as I know, there are no restrictions on improvising a song. The author may take any theme that impresses him or her, but the song is made for one or for a few occasions. It is only the theme and a few characteristic phrases that are remembered; the song is re-improvised time after time if needed. The variants show major changes in text in response to the outer (social) and inner (psychological) conditions of the performance. The text is not worked out in order to be sung frequently and thus to be transmitted. One can say that a stable private song typifies not the whole community but the author, while an improvisation cannot even be said to be typical for the author. Consequently, the opening and closing formulae referring to the identity of the author are often omitted. Lacking the most important information for the community, and the traditional frame of songs, an improvisation is not liable to transmission.

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[13] In 1971 one of my Ostyakian friends gave a farewell party. A 34-year-old bargeman from the Kazym region in high spirits told me: "Well, I have a song, do you want to record it?" I asked if he was able to put down the words if need be. "Sure" – he said and wrote down the text surprisingly well – before singing the song. It was a short song of praise about his fatherland, composed by himself. The melody, text and performance were so plain that nobody could tell it from an improvisation. Even if he sang slightly different variants at other times, his song is far from being simply improvised.

Improvisations cover a large sphere: they can be of supranormal[14] or normal function, epic[15] or lyric, objective or subjective. It is no surprise that we have very few recorded texts; the informants forget them or deem them unworthy to be sung.

The border between stable private songs and improvisations is not strictly marked, however. Under certain social conditions an improvisation can develop into a transmittable song with a fixed text, while a private song can be forgotten to such an extent that it needs re-improvising. Moreover, no scholar is able to tell a clever re-improvisation from a weak, fragmentary performance of a stable private song.[16]

It is the opposition between stable private songs and occasional ones that makes the category "for transmission vs not for transmission" necessary. In spite of the lack of records, the tradition of improvisation is sure to be the basis of the new trends.

4.4. The problem of the term "Schicksalslied"

Munkácsi and Kannisto seem to have used the term *sorsének* or *kohtalolaulu* as the term for a genre; at least, since they differentiated it from lament, for example, which is undoubtedly a genre, then *kohtalolaulu* sounds like the term for another genre. They applied this word to all the songs that I call "private".

A *genre*, however, ought not to be divided into such high-level categories as "for transmission vs not for transmission", or "non-epic vs epic", and must demonstrate some thematic and formal homogeneity. The word "fate" or "lot", referring to the theme, is not correct either. It is an excellent term for the thematic subsection of private songs that really summarize the author's life-story,[17] and may also be applied to non-epic songs that identify

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[14] E.g., the song about killing the bear, sung at bear-feasts, see OVE II: 259. A shaman's performance is also partly improvised. There are probably improvised prayers, incantations, maledictions, but we have no recorded texts.

[15] I heard a longish narrative improvisation in Tugijany (Berëzovo district) in January 1970. I travelled there with my Ostyakian girlfriend and our arrival was celebrated by her relatives. After a lot of eating and drinking, a young woman who had carried us by a horse sleigh improvised a song about our journey. It consisted of the detailed description of the places we had passed by, the difficulties we had encountered, and ended with our safe arrival. I don't think she remembered it the next day.

[16] It is difficult to differentiate between fragmentary constant private songs and impro-visations; a typical improvisation is WogT 86, others may be VNGy IV/1: 8, 10, 83, 105–106. MSFOu 134: 52.

[17] These are epic or epico-lyric songs, e.g., VNGy IV/1: 21–23, 24–27, 57–59, 70–73, (79–81, 81–82,) 87–92, 103–104, 134–138. MSFOu 134: 11–14, 22–26, 27–31.

the author by describing his or her circumstances, abilities, characteristic features and habits.[18] But why are songs that narrate only one episode, e.g. the story of the author's wedding,[19] or a narrow escape from a pursuer,[20] called "Schicksalslied"? Even less is this term applicable to songs addressed to another person (e.g. love-songs in the optative[21]) or those composed about a 3rd person theme (about relatives,[22] animals,[23] or places[24]).

In view of these considerations, I propose to term all the "Schicksalslied"-type songs **private songs**, and to consider them as a **group of genres**.

4.5. The system of genres of the private songs

Although private songs may be composed about any theme, their themes are mainly restricted by tradition. There are about 6-7 main thematic groups widespread among northern Voguls and Ostyaks that suit the requirements of minimum formal homogeneity. These may be considered as genres, though it must be added that the genres of a tribal poetry do not share all of the features of more developed ones. An analysis of the genres would be outside the scope of this paper, so I shall provide a rough survey just for illustration.

Group of genres: private song for transmission

Subgroup I. Epic or epico-lyric (narrative identification)

Genre	(topic)	(comment)
1.	the author's	life-story
2.	the author's	wedding
3.	the author's	other experience

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[18] E.g., VNGy IV/1: 6-7, 9, 12, 18, 41–42, 70, 140. MSFOu 134: 32–33, 34–35, 52–53, 58–59, 80–81, 81–82, 84–88, 89–90.

[19] E.g., VNGy IV/1: 29–34, 38–41, 52–56, 107–108. MSFOu 134: 90–91. OVE I: 425–433.

[20] VNGy IV/1: 4-5. The Ostyakian poet Vladimir Voldin has also recorded a man's song about a narrow escape (about 1969, Kazym region).

[21] E.g., VNGy IV/1: 1–7, 11, 28–29, 36–38, 43–44, 46–47, 49–52, 64–67, 77–79, (?) 92–96. MSFOu 134: 35–37.

[22] VNGy IV/1: 19. MSFOu 134: 16–21.

[23] VNGy IV/1: 17.

[24] VNGy IV/1: 127–128 (129–131), 132–133. MSFOu 134 (84–85, 94–97).

Subgroup II. Lyric or lyrico-epic (descriptive identification)
Classified as assessed by the author

Genre

1. songs of praise   (positive evaluation)
2. songs of complaint   (negative evaluation)
3. love-song in the optative (a compound of II/1a + II/1b)

(?) 4. song working out a social or psychological conflict

(compound of II/1a + II/2b, c)

(?) 5. song to a child or animal in the imperative

(a transitional genre with a feature "supranormal")

Thematic subsection of the genre II/1–2.

	(topic)	**(comment)**
	a) the author's	
	b) the lover's	characteristic features,
	c) a related person's	habits,
	d) an animal's	circumstances
only genre 1.	e) a place – its	

This system is not fully formulated yet. The traditional opening and closing formulae are always subjective, often contradicting the main theme. This raises the question whether subjective evaluation, positive or negative, should also be taken into consideration in the epic subgroup. The thematic categories refer to the main theme, whereas the formulae mentioned above are not to be considered as such. Compound songs are quite frequent; Munkácsi sometimes separated the parts with an asterisk inserted between them. In the case of less typical compounds the classification is quite problematic.

5. A comparative characterization of some types of Ob-Ugric European songs

This is a very rough scheme where a difference in one single distinctive feature prevents the identification of two types of songs and makes the development of European type songs impossible.

Distinctive feature	Ob-Ugric folk poetry				European folk poetry		
	typical private song	improvisation	bear feast dance song	heroic saga bear song	epic	lyric	*častuška* text
1. collective (+) private (−)	−	−	+	+	+	+	±
2. for transmission (+) not for transmission (−)	+	−	+	+	+	+	±
3. supranormal (+) normal (−)	−	−	(+)	−	−	−	−
4. song (+) prose (−)	+	+	+	+	+	+	recited verse
5. non-epic (+) epic (−)	±	±	±	+	+	−	±
6. dramatic (+) non-dramatic (−)	−	−	+	+	−	−	−
7. objective (+) subjective (−)	−	±	−	−	+	−	

As it has been noted by several authors,[25] the kind of European lyric folk-songs representing typified persons and situations is missing in Ob-Ugric oral tradition. This view stems from the comparison of Ob-Ugric private songs and European lyric folksongs, where all the features correspond to each other save feature 1. This fact throws some light on the dialectic connection between the role of the individual and community in oral tradition.

Private songs are the particular manifestations of themes mostly typical and traditional. They are transmitted by relatives and acquaintances for not more than 3 generations and they rarely spread over the region of a tributary (i.e. the territory of a dialect-variant). Additional information about the author and the song is well-known to transmitters. The song is too specific and personal to be adopted by alien people. On the other hand, the number of transmitters is too small to deprive it of peculiar data and thus to transform it into a typifying piece of art. Several records showing such a process can be found in Kannisto's collection, but cultural changes along the Loz′va and Pelymka Rivers put an end to further development.[26]

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[25] See note number 12.

[26] The performers gave poor information about the author and the origin of the songs (or are the references too laconic?): MSFOu 134: 70–79, 84–85, 85–88, especially 80–81 –

The equivalents of European-type folksongs are probably not to be found among the category of private songs. There is a comparable category of songs of collective authorship, namely the songs of not strictly cultic dance performances at bear-feasts. They fall into two classes:

1. Pseudo-private songs, usually of the II/1 or 2 genres[27] (often to be perceived ironically); sometimes also of the I/1 and 3 genres. These are monologue performances with pantomimic dance, although the II/1 type may refer to more persons (e.g., 3 girls) and is acted accordingly by more performers. References to the author (performer) in the opening formulae are either fictive or omitted. Allusions to the occasion of performing, and moralizing sentences are frequent in the ending formulae. The song may be in any grammatical form, depending on the circumstances: whether it is performed by or on behalf of the dancers, about or for them.
2. Pure dance songs, often with a fictive name in the opening formula. They describe the dancer's supposed outlook and comment or indicate his or her movements.

The text of both types of songs is highly standardized and may be popular in larger regions. As the theme is not supranormal and the dance is performed only "for the amusement of the bear and the audience", it is doubtful whether to mark the feature "supranormal" (+) or not. Thus the only difference from European dance songs is that it is acted. Another problem is that we have very poor information about the non-cultic dance songs of Ob-Ugrians. It is often mentioned that they sing and dance at domestic feasts (wedding feast, feasts after sacrifices for idols, and personal feasts) but nobody has ever recorded a song from these occasions. Nevertheless, in the past a lot of European lyric (or even epic) folksongs used to be connected with certain feast occasions and rituals.

As for the epic songs, the feature "subjective" prevents the development of any objective epic genres such as exist among European or other peoples. It refers especially to the genres that usually end with the death of the main hero (e.g., ballads). Ob-Ugric songs do not take such themes, and the genres suited for it (epic lament, and epic songs of non-supernatural heroes

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the latter piece is like a European folksong. The Voguls of Pelymka and Lower-Loz′va were soon Russified; the inhabitants of the Middle-Loz′va region either died out or were Russified, while the Voguls of the Upper-Loz′va region joined the culture of the Sos′va-Voguls.

[27] E.g., VNGy III/1: 268–269, 271–275. WogT 108–110.

in the 3rd person form) have ceased to be productive. Still, in the case of some private songs it was the epic subject that raised common interest and preserved the song for more generations.[28] Such songs would sometimes be told in 3rd-person prose,[29] or in a mixed prose-and-song form.[30] In addition to the structural and formal difficulties mentioned above, the development of an open society brings about a decline in the interest in private affairs, and favours short genres of songs at the same time. There seems to be no opportunity left for the development of the epics that used to be characteristic of Ob-Ugric folk poetry.[31]

The greatest similarities can be observed between the Ob-Ugric and Russian improvised genres, due to the relatively free forms of composition in both cases. As the themes are taken from actual situations, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether a song is a genuine Ob-Ugric one or some imitation of *častuška*s attached to a popular melody. The question can be solved by a stylistic analysis (*častuška*s have a very straight-forward, nonmetaphorical style of expression), but even this method may fail in some cases.

The popular Russian songs mentioned in section 3.2 usually share the features of European lyric folksongs.

6.1. Changes in traditional genres – Ostyakian texts from the 30s

The first collection of the repertoire of Ob-Ugric students was Steinitz's Ostjakische Volksdichtung und Erzählungen I–II (1939, 1941); the next was B. Kálmán's Wogulische Texte (recorded in 1957 and 1966). It is

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[28] We know of two such cases. One is an epico-lyric song of a mother who lost her sons, see VNGy IV/1: 21–23, 103–104. MSFOu 134: 22–26 also commented on by B. Kálmán, VNGy IV/2: 30. The other is the story of a Vogul girl who had been sold to a Russian as a bride and later flew home, VNGy IV/1: 79–81, 81–82.

[29] VNGy IV/L: 78–81, 81–82, 141–144.

[30] VNGy IV/1: 64–67, 139–140. MSFOu 134: 90–91.

[31] The same is to be observed in professional literature. Native Ob-Ugrians used to be good story-tellers and literate people were stimulated into writing autobiographical short stories. The majority of the writers still turned to be much better in lyrics than in epics. Their epics show all the difficulties of a beginning: insufficient themes, loose construction, schematic characters etc. Ju. Šestalov is basically a lyricist, even though he writes prose. Out of five Ostyakian writers the only one to have published epics alive is G. Lazarev. R. Rugin is the best short story writer among them, but his lyrics are even better. The others (P. Saltykov, M. Šul′gin, V. Voldin) are all lyric poets. I know only one Ostyak who has a purely epic vein: Je. Ajpin, a young writer from the eastern region. Russian is often chosen as a language of epic prose (Šestalov, Rugin) while poetry is published in the native language.

unfortunate that these two publications differ in the date of recording and in the nationality of the informants. It is in the category of private songs that the differences between Vogul and Ostyak folk poetry are the most pronounced. Vogul private songs were quite easy to find in the pre-Revolutionary period; they had a wide range of themes and poetic forms. In contrast to this, only a few Ostyakian songs are known; they seem to be more epic, and thematically and formally more restricted than Vogul ones.[32]

The texts recorded by Steinitz follow traditional patterns. The informants belonged to the first literate generation and had acquired the traditional culture before entering school. The majority of the material is of supranormal character (legends, prayers, and bear-feast genres), and the two private songs, composed ca. 1900, are fully traditional.[33]

6.2. An early epic song of political character

The new trends are represented by a single song to Lenin, by D. N. Tebitev (born in 1906 in the Middle-Ob region). During an interview about the old folk poetry, Steinitz requested him to try to compose a song about the "new times". Revised by Steinitz, it was printed in several publications in the late 30s.[34] This longish song (84 lines) is unequalled as a successful combination of the traditional style with a new theme in the oral tradition of the last decades.

Tebitev's song of Lenin can be summarized as follows: Lenin, being a wise man, surveyed the world and found that people were oppressed. He gathered the poor and advised them to make a revolution. By their own decision they drove away the oppressors and became happy.

As for the structure, it lacks the traditional trinity of opening formula – theme – closing formula, and consequently there is no reference to the author. The theme is represented in an objective 3rd-person form. The only comparable genre would be the 3rd-person form epic song of praise, a type not recorded in former collections. The handling of the theme resembles that of the supranormal songs of collective authorship, and a few expressions are even borrowed from cultic songs of idols. The song is a fine example of the traditional style.

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[32] Ostyakian folk poetry seems to be more archaic than Vogul: its themes are more restricted by tradition, the pieces of art are worked out in a longish epic manner, and the formal requirements of poetry are more prevalent (parallelism, alliteration). The freer a genre is, the more pronounced are these differences.

[33] OVE I: 425–433, 450–453.

[34] OVE I: 454–458; II: 294–295.

6.3. Popular poetry about Lenin – an oral tradition?

It is problematic to determine whether the popular poetry about Lenin (or Stalin), which existed from the 30s until the late 50s among all the nations of the USSR, is folk poetry or not. If we consider nonprofessionality to be the main criterion for folk poetry, then it qualifies, but if traditionality (in terms of transmission, theme, genre and style, is taken, then it would not meet the requirements. The unusual influence of centralized social administration and professional art, and the application of new mass media should also be taken into consideration.

In the case of underdeveloped peoples, without a middle class and a professional literature at the beginning of this period, this kind of poetry came from the class (or stratum) of the working masses, who were the bearers of the traditional ethnic culture. Probably newly educated people working in local social administration were the first to react to the new trends.

In spite of the absence of a professional literature, Ob-Ugric oral tradition shared the feature of individual authorship in most of the "normal" genres. It is irrelevant whether the author of a song is known or not; or, more precisely, it is unusual for this not to be known. Nor does it make any difference whether a piece of art is published or not: it could be transmitted orally even if this involved the help of an educated person able to read the music (a text without a melody is not liable to transmission).

As for the songs of the pre-World War period, when the society and culture of the northern Ob-Ugric groups was relatively homogeneous and external influences were easily assimilated, the only dichotomy to be distinguished is that between the traditional and new types of songs. Popular ethnic culture incorporates a number of historical layers. In a period of intensive change the manifestations of the new trends often seem to be atypical and inorganic until they result in the reshaping of the whole system. If they can be considered as popular (non-professional) and ethnic, their exclusion from oral tradition (folk poetry) makes no sense.

6.4. Changes in the types of political song

We do not know how many Voguls and Ostyaks composed songs to Lenin.[35] This trend has declined, probably because the War had cruelly thinned

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[35] Songs or poems about Lenin seem to have been the first steps by educated people towards professional literature; see M. P. Vakhruševa (WogT 157), Ju. Šestalov (WogT 132).

out the generation that was to transmit it. As in Tebitev's song, Lenin was usually identified with socialism. In the post-War period the trend in songs of a political character shows itself in songs praising the new life as opposed to the old one, differing from Lenin songs only in a shift in the point of view. This may be due to the fact that the ideas associated with Lenin have now been realized, and although leading personalities are still extremely highly esteemed, due importance is attached to people who carry through the plans.

7.1. Songs since 1945

B. Kálmán's informants belong to the second educated generation of Vogul society, although each individual came from a worker's family. In contrast to the basically two-layered culture of the 30s, the culture of young people today consists of three layers:

1. a traditional ethnic layer
2. a new ethnic layer
3. a new non-ethnic layer influenced by the local variant of Soviet Russian culture

This last layer carries phenomena entirely lacking in traditions (e.g. modern industrial work, urban life, high-level education, equal rights for women, etc.). The second layer incorporates phenomena with earlier roots, of which only the subsequent trends of development were influenced from outside (collective ownership, certain forms of the organization of work, local economic and social relations, etc.). None of these layers is independent; they are all present in a complex interaction in all fields of culture. As for the arts, the 3rd level is represented by professional literature, which is – with the exception of a few pieces – very remote from folk poetry.[36] Present-day oral tradition reflects all three layers.

7.2. General trends in oral tradition

B. Kálmán's collection shows a steep decline in traditional genres that do not fit the new circumstances. As religion is losing importance, its main

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[36] It is only Ju. Šestalov who uses the poetic tradition consciously if needed. Ostyakian poets either write Russian-type modern lyrics or simply put down their own variant of a folksong (V. Voldin, M. Šulgin).

representation is a group of 8 bear-feast performances with non-supranormal themes. According to earlier records, this used to be the most popular genre of all and could be collected in any northern village even from women. Another reason for the relatively poor material may be that cultic actions and consequently the supranormal genres belonged to the culture of adult men, and the majority of B. Kálmán's informants were young women.

Among the songs of normal function, there is only one private song, of a woman, which fully corresponds to traditional patterns.[37] All the other songs have unusual features in one or more respects. This does not mean, however, that they are entirely new (especially in view of the fact that our knowledge of private songs is relatively poor), but compared to Munkácsi's or Kannisto's records, they would not have belonged to the most typical songs at the end of the 19th century. Instead of longish traditional songs, the young informants seem to prefer short pieces, without data about the author, which are easy to learn. Some of the new features were discussed by B. Kálmán in VNGy IV/2: 35.

7.3.1. The problem of the occasion of improvisation, and the function of private songs

Neither the function of the private songs, nor the situation of composition and performance, is detailed in earlier collections of texts. It seems as if private songs were composed and sung as *l'art pour l'art*, providing an unusual freedom for artistic self-expression. This opinion is supported by opening formulae like "I (X.Y.) sing just for the sake of pastime"[38], or by frequent phrases like "the joy of a song". When contrasted with the group of supranormal genres with a strictly limited function, the relative freedom of private songs and improvisations is apparent: their only social function is to identify the author. This does not mean of course that there are no traditions connected with the performance of private songs, or that they cannot have other functions too. Such functions are prevalent in certain types of song, while in the case of other types no importance is attached to them. In the absence of proper data, it is impossible to classify private songs according to function; this is probably not their most important feature, and the majority would turn out to be multifunctional. An attempt at such a classification may prove useful in the case of improvisations where the occasion of improvisation, the function and the theme often overlap.

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[37] WogT 86–88.
[38] E.g., MSFOu 134: 11, 81, 93.

7.3.2. Occasions of improvisation and performance

The occasions of improvisation and those of performing private songs partly coincide. This fact creates the possibility for improvisations to be worked into private songs for transmission, if the situation is typical enough (i.e., regularly recurs). Accordingly, many private songs reflect the circumstances of their genesis. The traditional occasions for improvisation and singing songs fall into two opposed groups:

1. Stimulus-free situations
   a) journey by boat or reindeer sleigh
   b) lengthy waiting
   c) monotonous work

2. Situations of an elevated state of mind
   a) domestic feasts with heavy drinking
   b) overwhelming feelings (joy, sorrow, anger, etc.)

In both groups, improvising or singing a song seems to be an individual initiative, and the community plays a secondary role: the singer is alone or is accompanied by a few close associates (1., 2/b); all the members of the company have the same drive, and pay no attention to each other (2/a).[39] Tales and private songs were also performed for amusement in the evening on fishing or hunting trips, visits to relatives, in breaks during cultic actions, or simply in the family circle.

   The question of improvisation and function has arisen because B. Kálmán was the first to record a number of short pieces that can be considered as re-improvisations, and to give additional data on the function of the songs.

7.4. Songs for rowing

Although we have several references to travelling by boat as a traditional occasion for singing songs, actually no text was defined as such in earlier

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[39] In my experience songs are performed in the highest spirits during domestic feasts. The singer sings in a low voice, leaning forwards and backwards with the rhythm. Actually, nobody listens to him or her; people are chatting or singing their own song in the same way. If the participants decide to sing in chorus, they sing Russian songs of the types mentioned in section 3.2 (Ostyaks and Voguls of Tugijany, Berëzovo district).

collections. Munkácsi cited allusions from texts as proof,[40] and B. Kálmán referred to descriptions of such situations in his thematic register,[41] while Kannisto glossed a song as "sung during a moulting wild duckhunt" (by boat?).[42]

B. Kálmán published 2 songs with the note that they would be sung when rowing, and he has informed me about 4 other pieces of the same function.[43] The songs seem to have a fixed text and a rhythm that fits rowing. The grammatical form of the texts is in the 1st person dual or plural, mostly naming specific persons and places. In D. Monina's opinion such songs would usually be performed by girls rowing in company; each of them knows a few verses and they learn the songs during boat trips.[44]

The situations reflected by the texts are quite contradictory: 2 pieces have allusions to rowing (WogT 104, 156), and one to travelling by steamboat (106); others refer to walking around (82, 152) or even to waiting for a steamboat (108). Some songs of the collection have similar allusions to rowing, without being attached to this functional group (148, 210). All of these pieces belong to the genre of the praising identification of the author/performer.

It seems, as so often in the case of labour songs, that the theme is of secondary importance, as the emphasis lies on the rhythm and – due to the tradition of private songs – on the identification of the singers. It is quite certain that other types of songs, namely improvisations depicting the natural scene, the route and the destination of a journey, were also used to ease monotonous rowing.

7.5. Other occasions

In some cases, when the rhythm (and melody) is not restricted for practical reasons, the situations reflected by the texts are more clear-cut. Like many pieces in Munkácsi's collection, the traditional private song of M. Rombandeeva (a compound song of praise, WogT 86–88) depicts

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[40] VNGy I: XXXII.

[41] VNGy IV/2: 33.

[42] MSFOu 134: 94–97.

[43] Remarks to the melodies number 25, 26 (p. 351) and verbal information to songs on p. 104, 106, 108, 152. The song on p. 156 composed by M. P. Vakhruševa is not definitely a typical piece.

[44] Information by courtesy of B. Kálmán.

a journey by reindeer sleigh. A new, *častuška*-style song in SMNPT (p. 7–8) also takes a journey by sleigh as its main theme.

Je. I. Rombandeeva's song composed while waiting for the steamboat[45] is an excellent example of improvisations, although being a highly educated person, she sings it with a fixed text. The reduction of the formulae identifying the author, and the prevalence of a 3rd-person main theme, are also apparent. Two other private songs of praising self-identification represent the situation of waiting for a boat,[46] and many love songs collected by Munkácsi begin with a scene of waiting for the lover.

The problem of the occasion of performance and the function, and of the transformation of occasional improvisations into constant private songs, is still far from being clear. These relations play a very important role in the development of Ob-Ugric oral tradition, but a special collection of data and texts would be needed for further research. Songs with a special function seem to have been better preserved than others.

8.1. Changes in private songs

Whereas at the end of the 19th century a narrative style with plenty of detailed descriptions was quite characteristic of private songs, the pieces recorded by B. Kálmán are shorter, purely lyrical ones, that carry considerably less particular information than traditional types of songs. The majority of them belong to the genre of songs of praise (of the author). The private songs seem to come nearer to European lyric folksongs, and this trend manifests itself in many respects.

8.2. Changes in the person of the sender (author)

B. Kálmán was the first to report the fact that a considerable number (actually the majority!) of the new songs name more than one person as the author.[47] This is surprising, because since the main function of private songs was the identification of one particular member of a community (usually the

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[45] WogT 86.

[46] WogT 84–86, 108. The melody of the former is known among the northern Ostyaks as a man's song. Its author was alive in 1970, the song has been recorded without translation in Leningrad by Finnish linguists (?), and in Khanty-Mansijsk by a reporter from Ostyak Radio, V. Voldin. The second song (p. 108) looks like an improvisation.

[47] VNGy IV/2: 35.

author), there was no sign of songs identifying a group (of authors) in the pre-Revolutionary period. The number of the supposed authors ranges from 2 to 40 (!); the most frequent type is a song with 2 or 3 authors. The groups consist of members of the same sex and age. The types of groups are:

a) close relatives or friends, usually 2-3 persons mentioned by name[48]
b) a local group, any number of persons, with reference to a place (a village) instead of their proper names[49]
c) a professional group, 2–3 persons, often without names[50]

Because the villages are inhabited by related families and the members of professional groups are on friendly terms with each other, the types often overlap. The songs refer to the function (collective activity) of the groups and reflect a situation of cooperative action.

When a song belongs to one author, there is no problem with the authorship or with the process of composing and transmitting it. The existence of several authors raises the following questions. How can several persons compose a short song? Is there a leading personality among them who actually composes the song? If there is such a person, what is the function of the others? In what situations do people compose such songs and how long does it take to work out a fixed text? Have the members of the group got the right to work out variants of their own? On what occasions are such songs performed? Can they be sung in the absence of the co-authors? Who learns and transmits them? Unfortunately there is no information to answer these questions.

The tradition of songs attached to particular persons seems still to be dominant, although a trend of the reduction of detailed data (the proper name of the author, his or her father and native village) can be observed, especially in the case of authors from a professional group. The songs of related persons or a local group might have developed spontaneously – they are more traditional in theme and style, and can function as songs for rowing, for instance – while the songs of professional groups sometimes show signs of external influence.

The only comparable category of song is the bear-feast performance of a "normal" theme, in which 2 or 3 performers acting as a local or professional group were frequent even in the past.[51]

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[48] WogT 84, 108.
[49] WogT 82, 104. SMNPT 7–8.
[50] WogI 106a, b. SMNPT 11–12, 13–14, 15, 19
[51] For the types, see section 5. An example in WogT is to be found on p. 96.

8.3. Changes in theme

Changes in the theme reflect social changes, while changes in the handling of the theme are also due to the structural changes of songs (e.g., to the existence of several authors).

Songs of praise usually reflected the status and social relations of the author within a small community by means of describing his or her features, abilities, habits and circumstances. The songs seem to have stemmed in a real communicative situation: they were addressed to one or more members of the community, and had a special context as opposed to the current private songs of other persons. The best-formulated parts, with plenty of stereotype formulae, used to be the descriptions of the author's economic welfare. The description of the abilities was also intended to establish the protagonist's economic and social independence and high status.

Conflict between social strata due to differences in economic welfare has lost its importance under socialism. Collective ownership and equal possibilities for private wealth made the traditional formulae senseless; consequently the description of individual economic welfare is omitted (or is transformed into the praise of collective welfare). The description of the abilities of a person often emphasises his or her value for the community at large (for the collective or the province).

Due to the specialization of production, professional groups, traditional or new, are gaining more and more in importance. This fact is reflected in the development and productivity of the type of song identifying a professional group. As there are no conflicts between the new social strata and groups, the songs give a considerably less differentiated picture of the society and reflect fewer social relations within a certain community.

The existence of groups of "authors" causes several changes in the presentation of the theme, i.e., the celebration of the subject. The greater the number of the "authors" is, the fewer are the features characterizing each of them. Thus the descriptions tend to be more typifying and consequently more stereotyped; and at the same time the songs become shorter.

The same trends are to be observed in the case of old private songs that had been preserved for more than 3 generations (see also note 26), and in the case of the bear-feast performances of collective authorship mentioned in section 5. Although group authorship is not identical with collective authorship, they have a similar impact on the development of oral tradition.

8.4. The role of internal and external analogies

As has been mentioned, the closest analogies for the new songs are bear-feast performances of the pseudo-private song type. The quick development and wide popularity of songs identifying a group (of authors) would have been impossible without some traditions. As a number of the bear-feast performances were acted by 2 or 3 persons, the frequency of such groups is no chance. Moreover, the trend for generalized and typifying forms of expression seems to be spreading in the case of pure private songs too. New songs, especially those with no reference to the author's name, have come so close to bear-feast performances that it is almost impossible to differentiate them.

It is also apparent that the songs identifying a professional group coincide with the same thematic group in new Russian songs. As the theme of the songs attached to a local group can incorporate the praising description of a particular geographic unit (a river or a mountain) or a settlement, this type of song is supported by the Russian songs about Siberian places and towns. Such thematic resemblances multiply the productivity of a type, especially since these types of songs are selected for transmission by the mass media.

9. An attempt at objective epic

B. Kálmán published a fragment of an epico-lyric song about a Vogul social organizer named Little Zakharka from the village *muli-pāγəl*, who was killed by the Ostyaks of the Kazym region during a counter-revolution in the 1930s.[52] A variant of the original song text with the same melody can be found in SMNPT,[53] where it is recommended to folk groups. Both editions lack data about the author and the origin of the song. Since we have no records of epic laments, it is impossible to determine whether the song follows traditional patterns or represents a new kind of epic influenced by Russian culture. The latter supposition is supported by the unusual variability of the text.

The variant in SMNPT begins in medias res indicating that Little Zakharka was shot by the rich and shamans, then tries to explain the reasons in a few hasty sentences, each of them referring to different situations. Turning back to the opening scene, the song ends with a pathetic phrase that the hero is

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[52] WogT 146–148.
[53] SMNPT 5–6.

remembered by many people. The phraseology is traditional, but the style lacks parallelisms.

The transmitters of the song must have felt it to be alien to Ob-Ugric oral tradition, because the variant recorded by B. Kálmán shows it being assimilated to the pattern of private songs of praise. The changes are so relevant that if the melody and title were not the same, we should consider the two variants as different pieces of art. In contrast to the first variant, more than the half of the second text is a lengthy opening formula: a transformation of the formula "I (X. Y.) sing a song" into the 3rd person singular "It is X. Y. of whom a song is being spread by people". Similar transformations into the 2nd person singular were formerly used in hymns to gods or idols. There is no attempt at epic narration and the song suddenly ends by indicating that the rich decided to kill the hero (in the opinion of the informant he was thrown into the Kazym River). The style is traditional, full of parallelisms and filling syllables.

The case of "Little Zakharka's Song" represents the regularities of the transmission of genres that lack patterns in recent oral tradition.

10.1. Other types of new songs

There are certain new types of song gaining more and more importance – these represent transitional forms between pieces of private and collective authorship. The authors are usually known in the first period of transmission, but as there is no reference to them in the text, the songs are likely to be transmitted as ones of collective authorship. This process corresponds to the fact that, instead of the traditional self-identification, the aim of the author is to compose a fixed text of common interest. The songs either follow the tradition of songs of praise or use the patterns of popular Russian songs. They show a wide variability in the process of transmission. It seems that all songs lacking the opening and closing formulae of private songs are often not perceived as fixed units, and the performers rather re-improvise than copy them. It is usually the melody, title and the first lines that are unchanged, while the other parts are variable.

10.2. Songs of praise about the Ob River

This type of song, based on the traditional songs of praise about the author's dwelling-place, is extremely popular even in regions far from the Ob River.

The author is not known, although all the Vogul songs seem to be variants of one text published in SMNPT.[54] The Ob River is meant as a symbol of the national district, and the song thus corresponds to the type of Russian songs about Siberian places. Addressing the river in the 2nd person singular also reflects Russian influence.[55] The phraseology and style are traditional. The longest variant I have heard was ca. 16 lines long. It is the most representative type of new songs; the variants are often transmitted by radio and performed by folk groups at celebrations. If the Ob-Ugric peoples were to choose a national anthem, it would probably be a song about the Ob River.

10.3. Songs of political character

In spite of the lack of traditions, this type of song is quite productive. The classification of the songs is difficult, because of their shortness, variability, and fluctuating number due to their occasional character. They would deserve more attention, but due to the lack of data, I can provide no more than a rough survey.

The author is usually known. The songs either follow the tradition of bear-feast performances[56] and private songs of praise,[57] or reflect the influence of *častuška* texts[58] and forms of professional poetry. The themes change according to the periods of social movements; songs urging collectivisation were popular in the 40s, whereas recent pieces praise socialism and depict the process of building communism. Songs of an agitative character are in the 2nd person singular or plural, while other types are in the 1st person plural form.

Songs based on Russian patterns are either so plain that they hardly meet the requirements of poetry, or they are very highly variable. The terminology of new social phenomena is not fully worked out in Ob-Ugric languages, and the phraseology and metaphors used by the authors lack traditional backing. The variability of the texts is sometimes due to the fact that the transmitters do not understand the words properly.[59] Songs of a political character are

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[54] SMNPT 9.

[55] WogT 98, 98–100, 106–108.

[56] E.g., NOT 94–96, 96–98.

[57] SMNPT 3, 4, 10. NyK 80: 141–142.

[58] WogT 102. SMNPT 21.

[59] See WogT 96–98. The same process can be observed in the case of V. Voldin's song beginning as "Fly fast my song". Although it was composed not more than 10 years ago, the variant recorded by L. Honti in NyK 80:142 shows a very poor understanding

frequently broadcast by the mass media, and young Ob-Ugrians assimilated to Russian culture know them better than the traditional songs.

11. Improvisations

There are 6 pieces in B. Kálmán's collection commented on as being improvisations (i.e. re-improvisations) by the informants.[60] With the exception of Je. I. Rombandeeva's song mentioned in section 7.5, they were recorded in a fragmentary form from boys; the longest piece consists of 15 lines. They lack the opening and closing formulae referring to the author, and thematically and formally follow the patterns of private songs of praise about a 3rd-person subject.

   Although improvisations are the freest forms of Ob-Ugric folk poetry, the songs recorded by B. Kálmán are surprisingly homogenous. They all begin by naming a particular place (usually a village), then refer to the actions and abilities of the boys and girls (or other persons) living there. It is difficult to determine whether they are songs of praise about the homeland, a local group or a group of the closest relatives – these categories overlap. Songs of praise about the native village incorporate obligatory formulae indicating the great number of young people living there (i.e., establishing the continuity of the population). The pieces ending with such a formula seem to be songs of praise about the village.[61] Longer songs go on to praise a close relative, and the allusions to the village then serve the identification of this person. One song sounds like an improvisation of a mother about her son[62] (is it the song of the informant's mother?); another piece, recorded in two variants, is an improvisation by the informant about his mother.[63] The formulae depicting the subject are identical with those used in the 19th century; the improvisations actually seem to be exercises in the application of traditional elements of poetry before composing one's own private song. The most frequent formula is "If he/she goes to the forest, he/she is able to kill wild animals, if he/she

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of the original text. In contrast to the note of the informant, it was not published in Voldin's book titled *Khanty*. The usage of neologisms and individual metaphors causes the same difficulties in the understanding of pieces of professional literature published in the literary language.

[60] WogT 100a, b, 102a, 148.

[61] WogT 100a, 148 and also the fragment on p. 152.

[62] WogT 100b.

[63] WogT 102a, b.

goes to the river, he/she is able to catch fish" – it used to express the highest evaluation of a man (husband or son) in the past.

In spite of the extensive use of stereotypes, a well-constructed improvisation can reach a higher artistic level than most of the private songs with a fixed text. It comprises all the valuable features of Ob-Ugric oral tradition: the straightforwardness and lyrical character of the private songs, the power of expression of the formulae stemming in the experiences of several generations, the mastery in traditional poetical forms – while the lack of particular data makes the song more compact and typified. N. A. Sajnakhov's song about his mother (WogT 102a) is one of the finest pieces of art in the collection.

There is a short love-song composed by the grandfather of an informant, which, although performed as a fixed text, shares the features of improvisations.[64] It is a perfect piece in all respects and would fit even professional poetry.

The tradition of improvised songs is the most valuable inheritance of Ob-Ugric folk poetry, as it provides the possibility of development for both oral tradition and professional literature.[65]

12. Conclusion

Due to the recent social and cultural changes, Ob-Ugric oral tradition is undergoing metamorphosis. On the one hand, influenced by general trends in poetry, it is abandoning the ancient tradition of epic narration. On the other hand, the trends of development either favour the transmission of pieces of collective authorship or support the shifting of private poetry into professional literature, as has happened in the case of European cultures, including Russian culture, the basic pattern of culture for Ob-Ugrians. All the genres of collective authorship traditionally belonged to the sphere of supranormal function and have consequently lost their importance. At the same time, all the genres of normal function happened to belong to the group of genres of private authorship. The changes in oral tradition serve the solving of this contradiction, i.e., they are intended to work out genres of collective authorship and normal function. Traditions provide two ways for such a development: the detachment of lyrical songs of a particular person

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[64] WogT 105.
[65] Improvisations provide a field for attempts at new poetical forms; see the unusual structure of the song on WogT 100.

(author) or the depriving of bear-feast performances of their cultic function. The trends are supported by the tradition of improvisation, while the development and productivity of new types of songs are strongly influenced by the Soviet-Russian culture.

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Abbreviations

DEWOS	= Steinitz 1966–1993
K–T	= Karjalainen – Toivonen 1948.
MSFOu.	= Mémoires de la Société Finno-ougrienne
NOT	= Rédei 1968.
NyK	= Nyelvtudományi Közlemények
Osty.Kaz.	= the Kazym dialect of the Ostyakian language
Osty.N.	= the northern dialects of the Ostyakian language
OVE I.	= Steinitz 1939.
OVE II.	= Steinitz 1941.
SMNPT	= Муров В. (ed.) 1956.
VNGy I–IV.	= Munkácsi 1892–1910.
VNGy. III/2, IV/2	= Munkácsi – Kálmán 1952–1963
Vog.N	= the northern dialects of the Vogul language
WogT	= Kálmán 1976.

(Originally published by the author in English)

The Other Side of Khanty Metrics
(1990)

Thirty years ago, in 1958, the first standalone monograph about Ob-Ugric metrics was published, penned by Robert Austerlitz.[1] Its direct predecessor was Steinitz's foundational study of the subject, which is broader in scope but much less fleshed out than Austerlitz's monograph.[2] In the first part of his analysis, titled "Der Versbau der ostjakischen (und wogulischen) Lieder" (OA II: 1–29), Steinitz examines the system and rules of "metrics" as traditionally understood. The central materials in Austerlitz's analysis are the same 19 songs that Steinitz transcribed from his Šerkal and Synja informants. Steinitz himself had also explored the features of Khanty poetry based on these songs. Given that the majority of the songs are in the Šerkal dialect, the conclusions drawn from them reflect the singing culture of the Khanty known in Soviet linguistic terminology as "Middle Ob."

   This cultural region of the Ob-Ugric peoples is a complicated formation. To the north it borders the Khanty of the Kazym estuary, but the extent of its southward expansion is unclear, because no documented folklore exists from the groups to the south of the Nizjam-speaking Khanty, up to the Irtysh estuary. Historically, the volost of Koda and neighboring territories have belonged to this cultural region – at some point the region was a prominent, central Ob territory of the Ugric population. Ethnically the population is majority Khanty and minority Ob Mansi. Intermarriage and partial bilingualism have resulted in a completely homogenous culture. From an ethnographic perspective, the populations of the large villages along the Ob River can be differentiated from the populations of the Little Sos′va River, which runs parallel to the Ob River and to its left. The former populations are fishermen, while the latter hunt on foot in the forest. Linguistically, the

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[1]   Robert Austerlitz, Ob-Ugric Metrics, FFC 174. Helsinki, 1958.

[2]   Wolfgang Steinitz 1941. Zur ostjakischen und wogulischen Volksdichtung. In: Ostjakologische Arbeiten II. (OA II) Ostjakische Volksdichtung und Erzählungen aus zwei Dialekten II. Budapest 1976. 1–61. The other cited volumes from this series are OA I (Ostjakologische Arbeiten I. Ostjakische Volksdichtung und Erzählungen aus zwei Dialekten I. Budapest 1975) and OA IV (Ostjakologische Arbeiten IV. Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft und Ethnographie. The Hague–Paris–New-York 1980).

region includes the Šerkal (Ob and Little Sos′va) and Nizjam dialects of Khanty, along with the Ob dialect of Mansi. As a result of the region's central location and the political significance of the volost of Koda, the elements of this culture have been maximally refined, resulting in exceptionally regular and symmetrical structures. Fixed expressions allow less variability, and so their subsystems – without the opportunity for further development – have become somewhat rigid. The use of melodies that are almost European in their complexity, which is characteristic of the latest style within this singing culture, has retrospectively restructured the poetics and meter of earlier lyrics.[3] Šerkal Khanty does not differ in its fundamental principles from the metrics of more northern dialects, but it is much more regular and straightforward. It is no coincidence that it was on the basis of later Šerkal folklore (from the 1930s on) that Steinitz was able to determine the structure and rules of Khanty metrics. Since his work was the first comprehensive survey of the topic, and Austerlitz developed this analysis further, the Šerkal style will forever be the standard by which researchers of Ob-Ugric metrics measure the metrics of other dialects – even if the metrical traditions of those dialects prove to be more authentic and archaic than Šerkal Khanty. "Middle Ob" Khanty culture itself is disappearing. The youth, if they speak the language at all (which is growing increasingly rare), do not partake in traditional native singing.

When, in 1958, Austerlitz used a structuralist approach to describe the principles and basic concepts of Ob-Ugric metrics, he quickly found himself at odds – on a key point – with Steinitz's earlier, similarly structuralist analysis. The starting point from which Steinitz analyzed his materials was the idea of the metrical foot (*Versfuß*) being the smallest structural unit of Khanty verse. It was on this basis that he determined what constituted a line and developed his foot/line typology, a set of rules superordinate to linguistic structure; the typology applies to every line without exception. It was after this, as a second step, that he reached the sentence-level unit, and then, within this framework and with attention to metrical feet and syntactic regularity, he categorized lines as nominal or verbal.

Austerlitz did not believe Steinitz's metrical foot theory was justified. Based on the source materials, he did not consider the concept of the metrical foot to be useful – or scientifically provable (op. cit. 29). Applying a dual-method approach, he judged it possible to describe Ob-Ugric metrics without needing to introduce a concept like the metrical foot. First, he used

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[3] Éva Schmidt, Соотношение музыки, стихосложения и стиля народной поэзии северных ханты. CIFU 6 (1985): 231–237.

"qualitative" – that is, linguistic – analysis to identify regularity. In his approach, it is the sentence, as determined by SOV order, that forms the basic unit upon which verbal and nominal lines can be identified. Based on syntactic relations, first the verbal line is identified and then the nominal line. Two types of repetition can be helpful in identifying the boundaries of nominal lines: parallelisms and having a formulaic nature. His second, "quantitative" approach – that is, relying on the unstructured number of syllables within a line – can simultaneously help verify segmentation. Austerlitz used as his framework the number of syllables typical of a given song, and his analysis revealed certain differences among the main types of metrical lines (verbal, central, and introductory nominal). Even though Steinitz and Austerlitz applied different methods to their analyses, each determined within his own system that Ob-Ugric (and specifically Šerkal Khanty) metrics is completely regular.

I, too, relied on Steinitz's and Austerlitz's studies of metrics to begin my review of the audio material of approximately 200 Khanty songs available to me. The majority of them were songs I myself had recorded from Šerkal and Kazym tributary areas, and a minority of them came from other people's recordings and originate from the Upper Kazym and Synja regions, which are farther north. In tandem with my textual analysis, Katalin Lázár of the Institute for Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences has provided a musical analysis.[4] In this lucky confluence, which is a rare occurrence in the world of Ob-Ugric studies, both aspects of the songs – their lyrics and their melodies – are the subject of a coordinated study based on a unified concept. From my perspective, the most important finding is that for every rule, there exists somewhere an exception or counter-rule that, with its infrequency, validates the main rule. This work is still in progress and its results are yet to be summarized and published, but in the meantime, I will briefly outline a few of the questions that relate to the differences in the analyses by Steinitz and Austerlitz.

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[4] Katalin Lázár's relevant publications: Egy osztják dallam két változata. *Zenetudományi Dolgozatok*. Budapest 1982. 301–322. On a New Ostyak Folksong Collection. International Kodály Conference. Budapest 1982. 245–258. Variálás az osztják énekekben. *Zenetudományi Dolgozatok*. Budapest 1984. 199–208. Tercingadozás és hangkészlet az obi-ugor dallamokban. *Zenetudományi Dolgozatok*. Budapest 1986. 129–149. Некоторые особенности вокальной народной музыки обско-угорских народов. CIFU 6. 1985. 289–293. Egy motivikus szerkezetű osztják dallamtípusról. *Zenetudományi Dolgozatok*. Budapest 1987. 213–217.

1.1. The concept of metrics

Without referencing the academic literature, I must start by briefly clarifying what I mean by the term metrics. In this respect I am very conservative. The term refers to the linguistic manifestation of a multilevel hierarchy of rules that simultaneously code the acoustic, grammatical, and semantic modeling systems of verse. Its aesthetic qualities are determined by even higher-level modeling systems in which the subjective experience of the author and objective reality of the external world are brought into alignment, and various methods are used to make it perceptible. The metrical level includes the rules that are traditionally called "poetic meter" in a narrower sense. The acoustic unit that the metrical level is characteristically associated with is the syllable, and rules of repetition are prescribed based on a few of the dozens of features of this acoustic unit. Meter is therefore the system of syllable-level rules, regardless of which syllabic feature (number, duration, voicing intensity, pitch, or vowel quality) is used as the basis for rule-based repetition. Because the syllable functions as a carrier element simultaneously at the purely acoustic level and the linguistic level, these rules were originally developed based on sound. Linguistic constraint is manifested in the fact that verse extends and absolutizes certain rules that also exist in the colloquial language. For example, one of the rules that appears at the lowest level in the hierarchy of Ob-Ugric metrics – and therefore has the greatest scope – applies to the purely acoustic syllable. A linguistic rule of syllable structure is that two vowels cannot appear next to each other, but this does not apply at a syllable boundary. In songs, this deletion rule is resolved in all cases, regardless of whether the vowels appear within a line or at the boundaries of a line. To avoid vowel sequences, epenthesis of a semivowel (γ, *w, j*) is always used.

It is not just language but also music that has acoustic structure. Music prescribes certain rules about repetition based on the features of notes. These are to some degree similar to features also present in spoken language (number, length, intensity, pitch, and tone). In traditional cultures, music and metrical text were originally so closely connected that one cannot speak of the lack of one or the other but at most their different degrees of dominance. This applies even in those cases when the music does not sound melodic or rhythmic to the European ear. In the same way, syllable-level structure can also seem irregular or linguistically unmotivated. It is only in relation to one another, after all, that the music and lyrics can exist and become comprehensible. And so the question arises: in Ob-Ugric culture, which feature serves as the basis for their coordination?

1.2. The types and functions of stress

Unlike their predecessors who did their analysis deprived of metrical fillers, it was obvious to Steinitz and Austerlitz that Ob-Ugric folk poetry was musical verse and that its metrics could only be studied using the complete lyrics as sung. Of the two, only Steinitz had the opportunity to analyze real audio materials. He, however, in describing Khanty metrics, failed to properly clarify two basic questions: (1) On what basis did he determine the boundaries of the "metrical foot"? (2) Which is the feature that groups syllables into independent units of "metrical feet"?

The answer to the first question can be deduced from the following statement, with some further investigation: "Der **Versakzent**, die Hebung fällt fast ausnahmslos mit dem **Wortakzent** zusammen z.B.

> *ĭ·j nē | me·mna | nē·mij | ta:jəm,*
> *kē·jjem | ńo·χəs | mu·rat | ā·jnāj*
> *nē·mijem | tu·ťťi | γi:jət | ta:*
> *i·n śi | te·m ke | ju·pə | na:*
> *tā·ntəŋ| | a·sə | ma·t ju | re·mna...*"
>
> <div align="right">(OA II: 3; note from É.S.: emphasis mine)</div>

Steinitz notes here in a footnote that when a one-syllable word and three-syllable word appear together, the primary stress on the latter can fall on the second syllable, especially if it contains a long vowel. The example does in fact follow this linguistic rule. If we look at the source text from which it originates, the bear ceremony dance song of the Kazym goddess (OA I: 363–369), the varying number of syllables per line immediately jumps out. Lines such as the following appear next to one another:

> *nowijem kaťə χorasəŋ āj nāj*   (10 syllables)
> *nēmen tūťťiγijetta*   (7 syllables)

'Kleine Schaitanin von der Gestalt einer weissen Katze – so wird mein Name verbreitet' (lines 70–71)

Why does the number of syllables per line vary? Those familiar with the Šerkal Khanty language of song will likely know that the length of the first line is linguistically unjustified. It could just as easily appear as *nowə kaťə χorpə āj nāj* (8 syllables). We find the answer as soon as we look at the musical notation:

OA II: 299

Thus, the varying syllable count is due to variations in the rhythmic structure of the music. Naturally, the lyrics can also have some effect, since the length of the words and the requirement for variation can also result in different numbers of syllables. While Steinitz operates on the concepts of "Versakzent" and "Wortakzent," it is clear that the boundaries of the "metrical foot" are marked based on musical accents (beginning of the tactus). It is not difficult to imagine that if the musical rhythm prescribed a syllable structure of 3-3-3-3, then the beats, rather than falling onto the even-numbered syllables, would instead appear on the first syllables throughout – as is seen below in the song from the Kazym tributary. Linguistic rules only provide opportunities for the stress to fall in certain places, but in spoken language, just as in the language of song, the actual realization of stress occurs as a result of the broader context. In his analysis, Steinitz himself refers multiple times to the relationship between the melody and the lyrics. With respect to meter, he notes that both it and the melody determine the fillers used, which stretch short colloquial words into the metrically appropriate length, and they make rhythmic variation possible and match the number of syllables in the lyrics to the musical notes of the melody line (OA II: 4). The takeaway at this point is that the first step is to pay attention to the actual stress as performed – that is, the musical accents.

With this, we find ourselves closer to answering the second question. Steinitz describes "metrical feet" thus: "Die zweisilbigen Versfüsse sind Trochäen, die dreisilbigen Daktylen, d.h. die **Hebung** fällt auf die erste Silbe" (OA II: 3). In the sentence quoted earlier, he uses the word "Hebung" as equivalent to "Versakzent." Steinitz's consistent use of terminology associated with quantitative meter led Austerlitz astray – as it did me as well[5]. A quick glance is enough to convince one that a "metrical foot" has

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[5] Schmidt, Éva. W. Steinitz: Ostjakische Volksdichtung und Erzählungen aus zwei Dialekten I. *Ethnographia* 90 (1979): 294–297.

nothing to do with the features of vowel length (Austerlitz op. cit. 28). Steinitz, even with his somewhat unusual word choice, clearly shows that he is taking stress into consideration – he just does not emphasize it or consider it to be an organizing principle. The segmentation in his example marking the stress pattern is further proof of this. What he is communicating is in fact that the "metrical foot" is a kind of metrical unit in which a stressed syllable is followed by a few unstressed syllables (if followed at all). Without stress, there is no metrical foot. It would follow from this that stress is the organizing principle of Khanty verse.

Steinitz's statements are in fact misleading, because at the same time, he casts harsh judgment on the earlier Hungarian researchers who did not understand the point of Ob-Ugric verse (and considered it to be accentual verse) (OA II: 1, 24). A researcher's own culture naturally influences how he interprets complex phenomena of another culture, like musical verse. Hungarians are likely to consider Ob-Ugric musical verse to be similar to Hungarian verse and its stress rules – I admit to doing this myself. It is possible that Steinitz saw Ob-Ugric song through the lens of German verse, with its variable stress, in which the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables is reminiscent of the pattern of long and short syllables in quantitative meter. Perhaps this is the source of his terminology and the reason he considered metrical feet to have the same qualities.

So far, we have mentioned the following types of stress: (1) musical accents, which determine a certain basic rhythm; (2) linguistic stress, which determines the potential distribution of stress within the utterance, and (3) metrical or poetic stress, which occupies a space somewhere in between the two previous types. It is, of course, preferable for these three different levels of stress to align, but this is difficult to achieve, because each level forms its own system of rules about repetition.

1.3. Qualities of stress

We know that musical accents in a melody can be classified into primary and secondary accents. If we evaluate the frequency of overlap between metrical and linguistic stress in, for example, a line containing four beats, we find the following hierarchical structures:

1. The first beat falls on a word-initial syllable with primary stress: 100%
2. The third beat falls on a word-initial syllable with primary stress:

    a. Primary rule: nominal line: 100%
    b. Secondary rule: verbal line: less than 10%
3. The third beat falls on a syllable with secondary stress:
    Verbal line: about 65%
    For verification: nominal line: 0%
4. The second and fourth beats fall on syllables with any type of stress:
    about 65%

Linguistic stress refers to word stress. The ratios are approximate, because variation is very strong, due to the number of syllables and local stylistic traditions. Conclusion: The first and third beats are of a different nature than the second and fourth. The third beat is 100% regular, if we take into consideration the fact that even in the verbal lines that are the exception, the beat can only fall on a predetermined syllable and nowhere else. In contrast, the second and fourth beats can shift over from the word stress without any fuss – there are songs in which it is more frequent for these not to overlap than it is for them to do so. The first and third are primary stress; the second and fourth are secondary stress. Primary stress must necessarily overlap with the musical accents.

The resulting metrical unit is the half-line, which Steinitz recognizes as independent with respect to postpositions and hexameters (the type of line that contains six metrical feet). Within the half-line – excluding the verbal lines in which the counter-rule applies – all syllable-structuring operations must be completed. In the melody, the half-line can be an independent motif. In these cases, the line of text has a syntagma that can be split along the half-line section, and the half-line can be sung independently. The half-line is one of the most important operative elements in Ob-Ugric metrics.

At this point, the structure of the halved eight-syllable line can be represented thus:
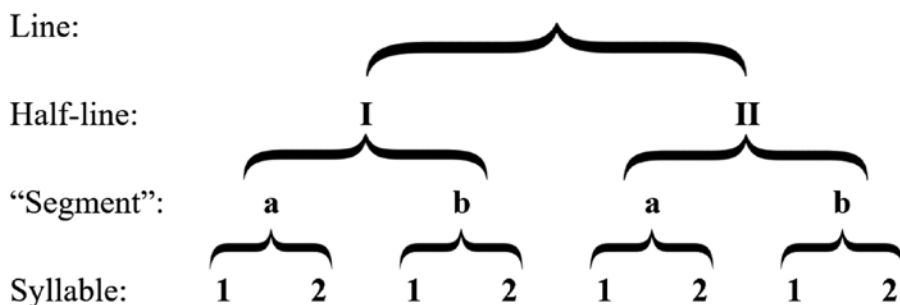
The metrics of any syllable can be determined like this: IIa2 – the second syllable of the first "segment" of the second half-line.

1.4. Syntactic segmentation and nominal and verbal lines
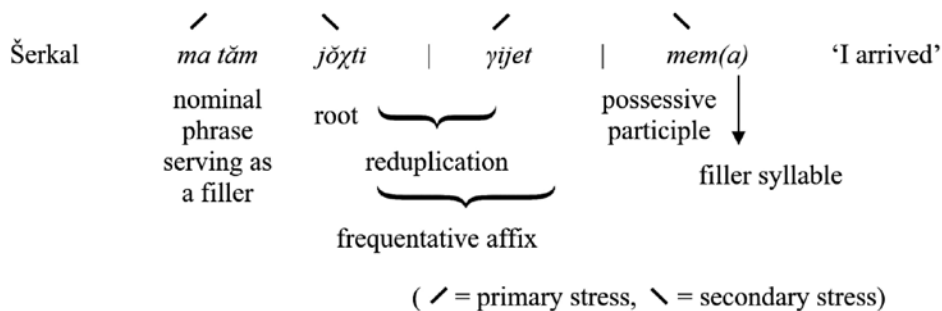
When Austerlitz did not accept Steinitz's concept of a "metrical foot," he simply stayed true to scientific principles. He was not able to listen to the songs, while Steinitz, with a few exceptions, did not mark stress in his examples. And so he was left to pursue a different approach: syntactic analysis. This was a brilliant insight from Austerlitz, because Ob-Ugric verse prescribes such strict, meter-based syntactic rules that we could justifiably call it stressed syntactic verse.

It was evident to both of them that this characteristic of verse does not come from meter in the strict sense; meter just provides the general framework. This phenomenon is based on a formulaic structure containing a compound nominal attributive phrase, a structure that is well known even outside of songs. Metrics requires that this structure must fill at least one line. If it extends to more than one line, the lines that do not end in a noun, such as those ending in an adjectival participle, can be described as dependent phrases, and certain metrical rules apply to them. Ob-Ugric culture expresses its most important concepts with two stereotypical strategies; for example:
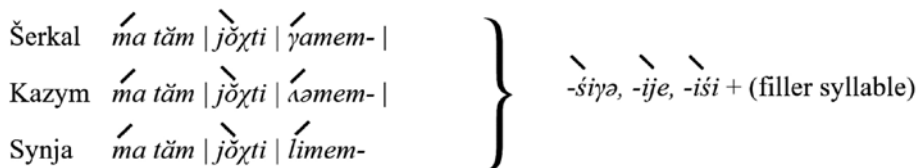
nŏwə jĭŋkəp tantəŋ as	*as pŭŋət ar wɔš*
'white-water food-filled Ob'	'Ob-adjacent many cities'
nŏwə jĭŋkəp xūtəŋ as	*tɔr pŭŋət ar wɔš*
'white-water fish-filled Ob'	'floodplain-adjacent many cities'

One stereotypical strategy is the attributive phrase, and the other is parallelism. Of the two, I do not consider parallelism to fall under syllable-level metrics; instead, it appears at roughly the same level as the rhyme scheme, and so we can henceforth apply the concepts of rhyme scheme to describe it: call-and-response, rhyme pairs, cross-rhymes, etc.

If we assume that the first part of each sentence is a formulaic structure the length of a line, a two- or three-syllable verb form remains at the end of the sentence in the colloquial language. In four-beat meter, it must fill a line of six to 12 syllables. It should be noted that Steinitz, too, only uses the concepts of nominal and verbal lines in this type of meter (OA II: 5)! This context requires special rules and operations. The distribution of stress is based on flipping the rule about the third beat – that is, the main stress of the halved line – inasmuch as the stress shifts from word-initial to word-medial position. This is in fact the secondary rule that verifies stress for nominal half-lines. Verbal lines of this type can be called metrical verbal lines. The structure is:

Šerkal   *ma tăm*   *jŏχti* | *γijet* | *mem(a)*   'I arrived'

nominal phrase serving as a filler

root

reduplication

frequentative affix

possessive participle

filler syllable

(╱ = primary stress, ╲ = secondary stress)

There are two subtypes of this strategy, depending on whether the more robust *-ijət-* derivational affix applies across three metrical units or if a shorter affix fills only two units:

Šerkal   *ma tăm* | *jŏχti* | *γamem-* |

Kazym   *ma tăm* | *jŏχti* | *ʌəmem-* |

Synja   *ma tăm* | *jŏχti* | *limem-*

}   *-śiγə, -ije, -iśi* + (filler syllable)

In the last "segment," the augmentative or diminutive nominal affix appears after the verb. The commonly used *-iśi* has no meaning, but it appears in approximately the same places as the *-ije* diminutive affix. Some affixes that attach to the verb root vary by dialect.

This is not the only metrically-bound structure available for verbal lines. As a secondary rule that can be used to verify this, there is a structure in which the nominal phrase fills the first half-line, and the verb fills the second half-line with the exact same form and stress as the verb that fills the two middle "segments" of the line. The difference is just that the stress qualities are swapped. This schema occurs not just in verbal lines but also in every line where the last word must span the length of half a line, such as lines that contain a dependent adjectival participle and lines with an appositive "personal name + kinship term," where the form containing a nominal diminutive affix is treated the same way as the verb. These lines represent a sort of typological transition to the kinds of verbal lines whose stress distribution does not differ in any way from those of typical nominal lines: the verb fills out the last few syllables. The previous types can easily be identified in our song samples. In metrical analysis of syllable-level rules, it is only worth differentiating verbal lines that are in fact structured according to special rules.

1.5. The organizational levels of songs (again)

It is undeniable that melodies, together with their rhythmic and stress patterns, exist independently from song lyrics. This is especially noticeable in "ad notam" singing cultures like the Ob-Ugric. Anyone can use well-known formulaic structures to compose a song to a well-known melody, and songs that have relatively well-established lyrics but are long are more likely to be composed again each time than to be repeated. Singers learn by ear where in the melody the stress should fall, based on local stylistic traditions, and which fillers can be used to achieve this. Without much difficulty, they sing the same formulas with different numbers of syllables and in different stress distributions, as required by the rhythm of the melody. They have, of course, no idea about verse – this concept does not even exist in the Khanty language. To their ears, a metrically organized text – that is, one that uses filler elements to achieve a rule-based distribution of stress – is simply a "song" (*ar*), even if, to the European ear, it does not meet the minimum requirements for musicality. On the other hand, irregularity offends their ears, too.

The organizational levels of a song can be understood as the following:

Musical: the pattern of accents in the rhythm of the melody
Prosodic: facilitating and coordinating rules
Metrical: the stress patterns that determine the structure of the line
Linguistic: the potential places for word stress

We have not yet discussed the prosodic level. This level determines the ways the metrical stress pattern (which exists only in the abstract) can align to the pattern of musical accents, such as what must be modified and how, and what must be deleted. If a song's musical accents differ from its linguistic stress pattern, this does not refute the existence of the rules but shows that the prosody of the song is weak. This level, due to a lack of audio material, has not been studied previously. Within its scope is, for example, the phenomenon in which one or two syllables "slide off" from the melody. This is noted in Steinitz's expedition journal as well: the last syllables of the line are sung to the first note of the following line (OA IV: 403). In the seemingly regular Šerkal songs, the second beat (first secondary stress) can be shifted over by one syllable, compared to the metrical stress in the entire song. In nominal lines, where the stress can already fall in the most varied places, this is not noticeable. In verbal lines, on the other hand, it is very surprising for the stress to not fall on the first syllable of the verb but rather

the adjacent syllable. Steinitz's corrections (such as OA I: 176 and OA II: 22) also apply to this level.

The alignment of the melody and the lyrics is also determined at higher, non-metrical levels. These include the rules determining the order and variability of the melodic phrase in relation to the lyrics. The preferred alignment – such as the final melodic phrase coinciding with the end of the sentence – can easily be achieved by repeating the melodic phrase and by using various forms of parallelism. This kind of rule-based regularity – even though it can be found in some local stylistic traditions and among some singers – is not characteristic of Ob-Ugric singing culture. The melodic stanza, or more accurately the melodic phrase or sequence, is practically completely independent from the lyrics. The most complex strategies occur within melodies that have what is called a half-line motivic structure. There is no real melodic phrase here. Instead, variations of the half-line motivic structures, in prescribed combinations, flow through the lyrics regardless of other factors. The start of the opening motif within the middle of the verb of a verbal line can occur in the most unexpected places. Due to the independent nature of the motifs, one or even two half-lines are often used within the lyrics. And if the melody and lyrics are not fully aligned, the segmentation of the song is barely noticeable. The transcriber may at first try to count the number of syllables in the nominal lines but will give up after several half-lines. He or she may try to find a metrical verbal line, where he or she hopes that the singer has not begun the metrical line from the middle of the verb (although this, too, can happen). Lost, the transcriber is ultimately left with no choice but to refer to Austerlitz's study of metrics.

2.

The following Kazym tributary song differs in many ways from the Šerkal metrical strategies we have grown accustomed to – and it contains several very special phenomena.

The Khanty of the Kazym tributary live along the right bank of the Great Ob River, as well as in a few villages in the area between the Great and Little Ob. Their lifestyle is based on fishing, and they consider themselves not Kazym but Ob Khanty. The youth have maintained sufficient knowledge of their native language, but they no longer practice traditional singing. As is true of the whole northern region generally, the new stylistic layer of folksong, which involves more complex melodies, has a metrical structure

that seems to us characteristic of Šerkal-style metrics. Archaic cultic songs retain old-fashioned structures.

The bear ceremony ghost dance song in question was performed by 55-year-old Josif Griškin. I recorded it in Tugijany (*tŭk-jakəŋ kǫrt*) during the summer of 1982. Josif Griškin's father had been a shaman, and so he too was well-versed in cultic singing. He had previously been a popular performer in the bear ceremony. Intelligent and strong-minded, he made an excellent leader – not in cultic affairs but as a foreman. He gave me an impressive performance of bear ceremony folklore, enough to fill an evening and a cassette tape. He had not performed the songs in many years – and this is evident in his hasty improvisation of the lyrics – but within the span of a longer-duration note he would effortlessly arrange the following line. If he stumbled over the lyrics at all, he would immediately correct this by leaving off a "segment," comfortable as he was with the strategy of splitting lines into two. To smoothly adjust the melody, he also used the uncommon strategies of a thirteenth verbal half-line and, even rarer, following it with a quarter-line (!).

The song fragment, which he performed on the last night, is from the ghost dance of the goddess Kalteś and is part of the bear ceremony. The metrical structure is a popular choice for this genre, the holy 3-3-3-3 structure, a four-beat meter with the greatest number of syllables. This makes it possible for the stress to always fall on the first syllable and for the same filler sound to regularly repeat in the last syllable of the "segment."

Two invariant lines, in Katalin Lázár's account of the melody:

The two main notes of the melody are the root note and the note a major second above it (which appear in the musical notation as G and A). Each line generally begins a fourth or fifth higher. In the case of accented notes, whether primary or secondary accents, it can happen that the note following the emphasis is lower or sometimes higher. When sustaining a note, the singer often adds a slight vibrato to the second half.

Features of the singing style include pitch variation, as well as the phenomenon in which notes that differ in pitch in certain parts of the melody

can appear as variants of each other (in this case, C and D at the beginning of lines). The rhythm typically has notes of varying duration. Ornamentation does not occur.

The basic unit of the song structure is the line, which repeats continuously in an AB pattern. (Note from É.S.: Due to the heavy emphasis at the beginning of the lines, vowel clusters are not broken up with epenthesis.)

> ... a landing big floodplain lake
> a wild bird landing big floodplain lake,
> by the bay of the bay-like lake
> who lives [there]?
> 5. Little girl life/her time/ /pre/scribed
> lucky boy life/his age/ /pre/scribed
> mother, I live [there].
> By the source of my food-filled Ob
> spring wild /bird/... landing...
> 10. ... wild bird landing /by/ a big floodplain lake
> this written, I live
> this... life/its time/ written
> live I do,
> mother...
> 15. Golden Hair Braided Great Lady
> my mother said previously:
> spring bird landing /by/ a big floodplain lake
> in a house covered by elk hide
> in a house covered by wild animal hide
> 20. lives my mother indeed.

(English translation by Melinda Széll)

Plot Types and Function of the Song-Folktale Genre in Northern Khanty Folklore
(2006)

The Khanty genre known as the "song-folktale" has not yet been discussed in the academic literature of Finno-Ugric studies, despite the fact that this has been an actively produced genre among the Khanty and Mansi up until very recently.

The "song-folktale" is an independent genre of folk poetry that is set to music and features collectively authored lyrics that are non-religious in nature. A similar genre of folklore was documented by the first researcher, Antal Reguly, from 1843 to 1844 among the Western and Middle Loz′va Mansi, although he used a different term for it. Bernát Munkácsi, who published Reguly's collection of work, referred to this genre by various names (*ālp ēri*, *pōχātur ēri* 'valiant song' among the southern groups and *χōnt ēri* 'war song' among the northern groups). According to Munkácsi's definition, it is an "intermediate genre between the folktale and the heroic epic, which differs from the latter in that it is not about characters elevated to divine status and respected in holy places; instead, it uses the poetic language of these figures to discuss common folktale heroes in part and marauding raids in part, the latter of which may conceivably contain traces of history" (Munkácsi VNGy I: 039). From 1888 to 1889, Munkácsi documented other non-war-related plots as personal songs that bear such a strong resemblance to Khanty materials today that they must be included here. In order to better understand the Khanty examples, we will review all similar Mansi works from Munkácsi's folklore collection. The Russian term (песня-сказка 'song-folktale') came into academic use as a result of N. M. Vladikina-Bačinskaja's work on the subject. This term is a loose translation of the

Northern Mansi term *pupiɣ mōjt* 'folktale of the clan's guardian spirit'. This term, which had not been traditionally used for Mansi songs, was used by the author in reference to the late, folktale-like version of the "Pine Seed the Valiant" heroic epic popular among the Ob-Ugric peoples. In many ways, this version, which was recorded in 1938, resembles the materials we collected among the northernmost Khanty groups – in its structure, musical features, and performance style.

Khanty folklore and specifically that of the northern groups lacks the early signs of the song-folktale genre. This is because the researchers' attention was focused on the genre of the sacred heroic epic about guardian spirits (*tarnəŋ ar*). The author of the current publication has not conducted special research on the song-folktale either, but knowing that this type of singing may disappear in the near future, it is essential to identify and do preliminary analysis of the genre. My recordings form the basis of this exploration: about twenty works in Kazym (Upper and Middle Kazym, as well as the Polnovat dialect), Berëzovo (Tegi dialect), Šuryškary (Synja and Kunovat dialects), and Ural tributary (Obdorsk) dialects. Other researchers' recordings have been considered as secondary materials, such as the Lower Ob recordings by I. A. Nikolaeva, the former researcher of the Institute for Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences. I participated in the transcription of these materials and received permission from the collector to cite these sources. Recordings of performances by various folklore musical groups are also used here. Video recordings constitute the majority of the materials. Where possible, we recorded both prose and song versions, in order to discover the rules that apply to songs, as well as to allow learning of the performances. The professional musical notation was done by Katalin Lázár, a researcher at the Institute for Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, who has been researching Ob-Ugric music for more than two decades.

The genre

Clarifying the terminology of this genre requires conducting special research and interviewing speakers of various dialects. The terms listed below reflect the categorizations used by the performers themselves. The best technical term was born by the Kazym River. The consonant cluster *-ńś-* in the compound word *mɔńś-ar* 'folktale-song' attests to the fact the word was formed by the blending of two words into a single expression. In the Polnovat region by the Ob River, the consonant cluster in the term

was simplified, indicating that it was understood as two separate words: *mɔś-ar*. In Vanzevat in the northern region, however, the term *arəŋ mɔś* 'song folktale' is also known. The term *mɔś-ar* is more common and *arəŋ mɔś* less so in the region of the Berëzovo dialect (around Tegi village) and in Kunovat, along the river, where the Šuryškary dialect is spoken. The latter term is used with a different meaning along the Synja[1] and Kazym Rivers, where it refers to prosaic stories that contain songs inserted within the narrative. But the reality is not quite this simple. Speakers of the same dialect and residents of the same village use different terms: *mɔś ar*, *mɔńśəŋ ar* 'folktale song' and *arəŋ mɔś* 'song folktale'. Along the Kunovat River, the plots of heroic epics are sometimes called *mɔś ar*, but they refer to the *tarnəŋ ar* genre – that is, the holy songs of high-ranking gods, performed during the bear ceremony. The similar (primary or secondary?) ambiguity of the terminology can be considered a characteristic feature of the song-folktale genre. The possibility of the genre's late origin also emerges, but based on the current state of research, it is more accurate to speak of the genre's vague and changing features, which manifest in other ways as well.

Plot types of the song-folktale

When first attempting to define this genre, the best approach is to analyze the specific plots of the songs that fall under this term. Without too much detail, we will identify the main types of plotlines, through which a concept of the song-folktale will begin to emerge. Identifying the features of each type can be done with only a single work in that category, as long as its relationship to the genre is properly documented. This analysis is based on a minimal set of epic parameters, but because so many characters of other ethnicities appear in the songs, we must also take the heroes' ethnic identity into consideration. The songs' metadata is shared here in a simplified form. We will indicate where the materials were recorded, but given the limited number of items available, we cannot speak to their geographic distribution in any meaningful way. In describing their plots, we have assigned titles to the songs, because singers typically refer to their works only with the name of the protagonist.

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[1] DEWOS 942.

1. Mythological-type plots

1.1. *ĭmi-χĭʌi* and the Lord of the Lower World[2] (Kazym). Three times in succession, *ĭmi-χĭʌi* asks to get on a reindeer sled. The third sled takes him to a square made of iron, where he must go up against the antihero, under the condition that the winner will become the god of death in the human era. The hero triumphs.

1.2. The heavenly *mɔś* man[3] (Kazym). On skis, the *mɔś* man chases a six-legged elk across the Ural Mountains. When he catches up with it, he cuts off its hind legs to make it huntable in the human era. The elk turns into a constellation that helps people navigate.

1.3. The son of *jɔm ɔʌəŋ naj*[4] (Tegi). A mother (a Khanty woman of the Ural region) convinces her son to visit her relatives. A dog guards his herd of reindeer. The mother's siblings get the hero drunk and, on her orders, they cut his stomach open. His youngest aunt takes him to a tree, where a woman is standing. The woman immediately goes in search of help. God lifts him into heaven and revives him in the life-prolonging house.

    The hero wipes out his relatives and kills his mother. He gives his youngest aunt's hand in marriage to the man into whom his dog has transformed. He himself marries the woman who helped him. (The hero is equivalent to a god.)

2. Heroic-type plots

2.1. Song of the hero[5] (Middle Loz′va, 1844, Mansi, two versions). The young hero asks his uncle for his late father's armor, breaks an enchanted horse, and sets off on a journey. He spends the night at the home of an older

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[2] Performer: Moldanova Jekaterina Vasil′evna. Place of residence: Belojarskij. Recording: Institute for Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, 1990.

[3] Performer: Tarlina Praskov′ja Makarovna. Place of residence: Kazym. Recording: Institute for Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, 1990.

[4] Performer: Novjukhova Fedos′ja Ignat′evna. Place of residence: Tegi. Recorded by Éva Schmidt, 1993.

[5] Version 1: Performer: ?Bakhtijarov Vasilij Mikitič. Place of residence: near Vsevolodsk. Written down by Antal Reguly, 1843–44. Published: VNGy IV/1: 145–156. Version 2: Jurkin Pĕtr Fëdorovič. Place of residence: Jurta Jurkina (*tat-tat-paul*). Published: VNGy IV/1: 156–167.

couple, who slaughter an animal on his behalf and treat him to a generous meal. On his journey, he clashes with some townspeople. These brawlers (in version 2: drunken partygoers) toss him into a pit. He crafts a dombra (musical instrument) out of woodchips and his own hair and plays it. With the help of some geese flying by, he calls his horse to come free him.

   (Version 1) When he arrives home, he does not recognize his own sons. He asks his wife to awaken him when the enemy approaches; he destroys them. Before his death, he swears he will rise up again in seven years, but he is unable to do so because of a stone that his sister-in-law has placed over his heart.

2.2. Man with the bast fiber hat (Middle Lozʹva, 1844, Mansi). The young hero is being raised by his uncle. While he was playing with a bow, his arrow fell on the "little house" of the daughter of the Prince of the City. She tries to seduce the hero. To avoid breaking the taboo, he kills the girl with a knife. He explains the situation to the girl's father, who forgives him and gives the hero skis and a bow (which have been intentionally damaged). The hero notices and asks his uncle for equipment.

   He goes hunting for elk with seven Nenets young men who have been hired by the Prince of the City. They first try to kill him, pinning their hopes on his broken equipment, but the new equipment does not break. Upon their second attempt, the hero kills a herd of elk and also kills the Nenets young men.

2.3. *jɔwi* the Valiant[6] (Kunovat). *jɔwi* the "One-Legged Nenets" gets word that the "Hero as Big as Four Russian Faces," who is stronger than him, has appeared in the tundra. In pursuit of him, *jɔwi* travels on a reindeer sled through the sky, first through a city of copper, then silver. When he reaches the place his opponent is spending the night, a shoot-out begins. The hero escapes by fleeing on foot towards the Ob River. Leaving behind his opponent, who has been transformed into stone, the hero rises into the sky.

2.4. Song about the army at the end of the sea[7] is partially in prose (Upper Lozʹva, 1888, Mansi). At a tundra campsite, a mother warns her son that the army is approaching. The son shoots them all down with arrows. Disguised

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[6]   Performer: Tojarov Semën Tikhonovič. Place of residence: Kunovat (*săŋχəm kuʀ*). Recorded by Éva Schmidt, 1994.

[7]   Performer: Jelesina Marfa. Place of residence: *Sav-paul*. Written down by Bernát Munkácsi, 1888. Published: VNGy IV/1: 173–175.

as an iron hawk he reaches a fortress, which extends down from the sky at the end of the sea. He kills the two leaders of the opposing army and takes all their belongings. When he arrives home, he plays a prank on his mother by tossing snow down the smokehole.

2.5. Song about the heroic Nenets man raised on reindeer milk[8] – prose (Upper Sos′va, 1888, Mansi). The hero struggles to catch up with the fox he is hunting – this is an omen of his death. But when he gets home, he sees that his campsite has been destroyed and that his herd and his household have been taken by the "heartless-liverless (=immortal) hero." He tracks him down and learns from his daughter-in-law where his opponent's weapon is; he destroys it. He wins the duel, but the only way he is able to kill the heartless-liverless hero is by tying him to a sled.

3. Everyday-type plots

3.1. Betrothal of a Tungus girl: 1[9] (Kunovat). A young man (Khanty from the Ural region) convinces his father to ask on his behalf for the hand of the youngest daughter of a Tungus (Evenk?) family. The young man trains and once he gathers enough strength, he wins the right to the girl in a competition. His father-in-law takes him in for a trial period. His bride warns him of the danger that awaits him if he sleeps at home. The woman prepares him with the necessary supplies. And so, when the bride's relatives try to kill him, he escapes. The hero is accepted into the family as a son-in-law.

3.2. Betrothal of a Tungus girl: 2[10] (Lower Ob, two versions). The owner of a reindeer herd decides he will ask for the hand of a Tungus girl on behalf of a trusted farmhand. He entrusts the care of his herd to the farmhand and goes to the Tungus people. He buys a bride who has a large dowry. When he sets off on his journey home, he is forbidden from looking back. He defies the ban and as a result, some of the reindeer from the dowry return. Once he arrives home, it turns out the person he thought to be the bride is actually

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[8] Performer: Nomin Vasilij Kirilič. Place of residence: Njaksimvol′. Written down by Bernát Munkácsi, 1888. Published: VNGy IV/1: 169–173.

[9] Performer: Kimlobazova Jevdokija Dmitrievna. Place of residence: Lopkhari. Recorded by Éva Schmidt, 1997.

[10] Version 1: Performer: Seražova Anna Pavlovna. Place of residence: Katravož. Recorded by I. A. Nikolaeva, 1990. Version 2: Seražova Aleksandra Pavlovna. Place of residence: Katravož. Recorded by I. A. Nikolaeva, 1990. (It is performed in first-person singular!)

a man dressed as a woman. The army soon appears, they kill the protagonist and his farmhand, and they take all their belongings. (Version 2: The hero is seeking a wife for himself, and he entrusts his younger sister with the herd.)

4. Everyday-type plots about raids

4.1. The *mɔś* man and the Nenets army[11] (Kazym tributary). The northern Nenets army attacks the hero's campsite. The *mɔś* man escapes, and the Nenets kidnap his older sister and his herd. The sister hides some necessary items for her brother to find. He takes revenge on the enemy, regains his herd, and even takes the Nenets herd as his own.

4.2. The *mɔś* man and the enemy army[12] (fragment, Kazym tributary). An army attacks the campsite. The *mɔś* man is awakened by his sister and destroys the enemy army…

4.3. Song about the Nenets army[13], in prose (Upper Loz′va, 1888, Mansi). During his travels, a rich Nenets man loses his ax, which he had bought in the city of Jenšing, and he goes off in search of it. During this time, the Nenets army kills his son-in-law, the "one-legged Nenets," and kidnaps his sister and his reindeer herd. He launches a surprise attack on the enemy and kills them.

5. Folktale-type plots

5.1 The *mɔś* woman and the *pŏr* woman[14] (Lower Ob, two versions). The *mɔś* brothers command their sister to keep the entrance to the tent closed

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[11] Performer: Jukhlimova Praskov′ja Nikolaevna. Place of residence: Polnovat. Recorded by Éva Schmidt, 1993.

[12] Performer: Moldanova Jevdokija Jegorovna. Place of residence: Vanzevat. Recorded by Éva Schmidt, 1993.

[13] Performer: Ukladova Anna Ivanovna. Place of residence: Bakhtijarova jurta (*lūsumtaľəχ paul*). Written down by Bernát Munkácsi, 1888. Published: VNGy IV/1: 167–169.

[14] Version 1: Performer: Kel′čina Agrippina Konstantinovna. Place of residence: ?. Recorded by I. A. Nikolaevna, 1990. Version 2: Performer: Kondygina Tat′jana Afanas′evna. Place of residence: Čapaevsk. Recorded by Éva Schmidt, 1997.

while the brothers are out hunting. The older sister does not obey. The *pŏr* woman notices the light inside the tent and requests to come inside. The sister kills the *pŏr* woman, eats her fat, and becomes as fat as the tent itself. (Version 2: The sister eats her returning brothers, but she lets the youngest one go.) The brothers must wound her to free her from the consequences of her fat-eating feast.

5.2. The rich Nenets man and the wild reindeer calf[15] (Lower Ob). A rich Nenets man wanted to drink the blood of a wild reindeer, and despite his son's protestation he stubbornly went hunting. He finds a wild reindeer calf, and even though it pleads for its life, he kills it. But while he feasts, a group of Tungus men kidnap his son and his herd and mock his wife.

The Nenets man and his wife set off to find their son. From the ravens they learn that he has been killed. They send off a raven to find some grass of revival and with it they bring the boy back to life. The herd remains with the Tungus.

5.3. The gluttonous little mouse[16] (Kazym, Kazym tributary, Tegi, Lower Ob). A little mouse is traveling in a rowboat when three of his maternal aunts invite him to come eat. The mouse rejects the invitation of the eldest and middle aunts; at the youngest aunt's, the mouse eats so much that his stomach explodes. They sew his stomach back together, and the little mouse continues on his journey. (He kills an elk or reindeer with trickery.)

6. Other everyday-type plots

6.1. The woman who escaped from her husband of a different ethnic group[17] (Kazym tributary, Tegi, Kunovat and Khanty, Upper Loz′va, 1888,

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[15] Performer: Seražova Anna Pavlovna. Place of residence: Katravož. Recorded by I. A. Nikolaeva, 1990.

[16] Version 1: Performer: Tarlina Praskov′ja Makarovna. Place of residence: Kazym. Recording: Institute for Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, 1990. Version 2: Performer: Kazym folklore group, directed by V. M. Vakueva. Recorded by Éva Schmidt, 1993. Version 3: Performer: Novjukhova Fedos′ja Ignat′evna. Place of residence: Tegi. Recorded by Éva Schmidt, 1993. Version 4: Performer: Seražova Aleksandra Pavlovna. Place of residence: Katravož. Recorded by I. A. Nikolaeva, 1990. (Part 1: The reindeer is killed. Part 2: Feast at Grandmother's; the mouse dies.)

[17] Version 1: Performer: Jukhlimova Praskov′ja Nikolaevna. Place of residence: Polnovat. Recorded by Éva Schmidt, 1993. Version 2: Performer: Novjukhova Fedos′ja Ignat′evna. Place of residence: Tegi. Recorded by Éva Schmidt, 1993. Version 3: Performer:

Mansi, prose). The siblings deceitfully sell their younger sister to a rich man belonging to a more civilized people, after getting her so drunk she loses consciousness. The woman comes to in her groom's house and sees that she is dressed in foreign clothing. She gives birth to a son, abandons him during the berry-picking season, and runs home. She takes revenge on her relatives for betraying her. (Version 2: A rich Russian man seduces the girl, and her brothers take her home. Version 3: Birds show her the way home.)

6.2. A man in a putrid malitsa seeks a bride[18] (Kunovat). A poor man learns of a rich girl's wedding, and he slips in and mingles with the guests. As the drunken wedding party sleeps, he secretly spends the wedding night in the bride's sleeping tent. He gets the woman and her dowry.

An attempt at categorizing these plots by their most basic themes reveals the same features and challenges that arise when we come across relatively atypical storylines in folktales. Noticeably, in the traditional grouping, the plots follow one another in a logical order, starting with mythological themes and ending with everyday stories about raids, if we exclude the folktale-type category. This demonstrates the extremely close relationship between the song-folktale and the heroic epic, which Bernát Munkácsi also emphasized.[19]

Kazym, Kunovat and Lower Ob singers often make no distinction between the heroic epics of idol spirits and song-folktales, given that the episodes, motifs, formulas, meter, and melodies(?) are almost identical. They differ only in the relationship of the hero to the sacred sphere, and consequently the degree to which the plot resembles reality differs as well. There is a level where the texts can originally be split into "plots about battles" and "other plots." In the former category, nearly identical epic motifs appear in the "heroic" and "everyday" groups (such as the mother's or wife's deceitful relatives, a woman on the enemy's side who helps the hero, traps, adversities in seeking a bride, animals and weapons of supernatural strength, etc.). But within the category of Ob-Ugric storylines that are strictly considered

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Muratova Marija Andreevna. Place of residence: Lopkhari. Recorded by Éva Schmidt, 1995. Version 4: Performer: Ukladova Akulina Kirillovna. Place of residence: *lūsum-taľəχ paul*. Written down by Bernát Munkácsi, 1888. Published: VNGy IV/1: 79–81. Version 5: same as previous: 81–82.

[18] Performer: Muratova Marija Andreevna. Place of residence: Lopkhari. Recorded by Éva Schmidt, 1994.

[19] Munkácsi dedicated a thick volume to the sacred Ob-Ugric heroic epic; in it, he reviewed all important motifs in detail (VNGy II/1: 497–756).

"heroic," it is extremely atypical for the main conflict to be purely economic, such as the theft of one's herd or possessions. It is just as foreign for a hero to be killed without crossing over into another world (an example of this is the Middle Loz′va song of the hero). The concept of the "heroic" aesthetic quality is based to this day on the sacred epic, and plots are considered to be "heroic" inasmuch as they end with the hero being elevated to the status of an idol spirit. Thus, any number of heroic or miraculous motifs can appear in plots about raids, and this does not determine whether the work will end up in the category "heroic" or "folktale." Similarly, "plots involving the tundra" could be split out from "plots about battles." From the perspective of the Khanty who live in the middle zone, the items that feature Nenets characters could form their own category. A great number of Nenets people are found in the vicinity of the Khanty of the Ural region (Obdorsk Khanty). These storylines are about raids and the theft of the protagonists' herds; they are difficult to categorize according to Ob-Ugric genre norms.

References

DEWOS = Steinitz, Wolfgang 1966–1993. *Dialektologisches und etymologisches Wörterbuch der ostjakischen Sprache*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.

VNGy refers to the following series:

Munkácsi, Bernát 1892–1921. *Vogul népköltési gyűjtemény I–IV*. Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia.

(English translation by Melinda Széll)

Cultural Revitalization

The Northern Khanty Folklore Archive
in Belojarskij, 1991–
(1997)

First published in 1997 as a 12-page photocopied booklet in Hungarian, illustrated with photographs, titled "A Belojarszkiji Északi-osztják Folklór Archívum 1991–"

Hungarians' closest linguistic relatives

In the middle of the first millennium B.C.E. in Southwestern Siberia, the ancestors of Hungarians split off from the ancestors of those who would later become the Khanty and the Mansi. The latter group moved up along the Ob River to the marshy lands of the taiga and developed an extraordinary culture. As if they had been directed to serve as the guardians of their roots, they returned to their traditional forest-based livelihood and swapped their horses for reindeer. At the same time, their valiant warriors lived in fortresses and preserved their complex religion; the heights of their spiritual culture always stood in stark contrast to their humble lifestyle.

Russian colonialism reached the Khanty and Mansi in the late 1500s, and by the late 1800s, the impoverishment that ensued had begun to threaten their way of life. Soviet rule lifted them up at first, but the repression, shocking loss of the male population in war, forced resettlements and roundups, and boarding school system broke the traditional culture. Within the last thirty years, the effects of the oil boom, with its destruction of nature and the influx of one million workers, has made the situation of the Khanty and Mansi peoples similar to that of Native American tribes on the brink of extinction.

Mansi speakers now number around 3,500, while Khanty speakers total about 17,000. The last generation raised within the traditional culture are now in their sixties. The youth, who have been intentionally alienated from their native culture, do not have a particularly strong attachment to their native language and ethnic culture, but at the same time, they feel like their lives have been irreparably destroyed. The best among them have realized that the only true way of life is the ethnic life. For them, Hungarians are like a magical mirror showing that a people with whom they share roots have been able to survive within their own ethnic island and have enriched humanity with their own form of civilization.

The study of the Khanty people

Few researchers have had the opportunity to preserve Khanty spiritual traditions in their original language. The first major researcher to collect works from the Khanty was Antal Reguly, who in 1844 documented a library's worth of epics from a single northern singer, detailing the heroic past of this people. József Pápay deciphered his manuscript and further expanded this research in his expedition of 1898. The Russian researcher Patkanov published a volume of Southern Khanty folklore at the turn of the twentieth century. The Finnish researcher H. Paasonen gathered heroic epics in 1899, and later from 1898 to 1902, his compatriot K. F. Karjalainen documented sample materials in his study of all the dialects.

In the Soviet period, it was considered undesirable to conduct fieldwork abroad. It was only W. Steinitz, a German emigrant and researcher of Finno-Ugric studies, who managed to collect additional materials; he gathered three volumes' worth of various materials around 1935. Not even the few Russian specialists who spoke the language found better opportunities for fieldwork. During this most crucial half-century, the practice of documenting Khanty culture in its original language became an unknown phenomenon.

The founding father of native Khanty philology, N. I. Terëškin, had begun in the 1940s to preserve folklore in every dialect, at the same time that his own Southern Khanty group was disappearing up to the very last person. The few Khanty people skilled in linguistics were tasked with developing textbooks for schoolchildren. Anyone who wanted to preserve the message of the ancestors from the last performers had to do so without training and without the faintest hope of publishing it. It was not until 1990 that Khanty intellectuals began to value preserving and researching the spoken language of the remaining dialects and the folklore that served as a key to their ethnic identity.

The history of the Northern Khanty Folklore Archive of Belojarskij

In the early 1980s, Khanty culture was so deprived of opportunities to reproduce itself that it was on track to entirely disappear in thirty years. It was at this time that Éva Schmidt, trained in ethnography, folklore, and Finno-Ugric studies, began the work of establishing an international center for education and documentation. The proposal, through the intercession of renowned ethnographer N. V. Lukina from Tomsk, reached the appropriate

Soviet administrative bodies, with the support of Hungary's Minister of Culture and Public Education, as well as the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. At that time, the idea of such a complex international academic institution verged on fantasy. The plan was not rejected, but its implementation became the achievement of a later period.

The Khanty and Mansi had their first independent opportunity for cultural diplomacy when they were introduced at the Seventh International Finno-Ugric Congress in Debrecen, Hungary, in 1990. Bertalan Andrásfalvy, Hungary's minister of education, discussed the planned folklore archive as a form of cultural cooperation. It was agreed that the host party would cover the basic expenses, office space, and an apartment for onsite accommodation, while the Hungarians would cover the costs of Éva Schmidt's contract and her specialized library. A copy of the Hungarian researcher's fieldwork collections and textual analysis would be submitted to the Institute of Ethnology at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and it was in this way that the Hungarian Academy of Sciences would support the endeavor as one of its own programs.

The signing of the initial three-year agreement and the founding of the institution took place in 1991, the most difficult year of the post-communist transition. Due to the undeveloped nature of the Khanty administrative agencies, the District Council of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug was originally responsible for financial support, and the Cultural Department of the Raion Council in Belojarskij served as its supervisory body. Lacking the appropriate premises to house the archive and its director, they managed to find a temporary rental lease on a three-room apartment within a housing block, which served as both the archive's workspace and its employee housing. Furniture was provided by the host country, but the technical infrastructure needed for academic research was not available in a small town in the taiga – Hungary's Ministry of Culture and Public Education provides this funding even today. It was a positive development when the institution later fell under the budget of the Northern Fund and under the administrative purview of the department for nationalities. In recognition of the importance of this work, Éva Schmidt's contract was extended to 1996, and later 1999, but following the departure of its director, the archive and its irreplaceable collection of materials are at risk of disappearing.

During the "heroic" period of 1991–93, the archive offered a financial and organizational foundation for the revitalization of Khanty culture, and it was involved in historic events, such as participating in four bear ceremonies and organizing a string of sacrificial feasts, all fully documented.

Due to a lack of sufficiently trained professionals for fieldwork, technical work supplementing fieldwork was performed within its walls – although one employee, T. A. Moldanov, later went on to have an impressive career. The real work began in 1995. Following the archive's example, five other archives soon opened, creating a whole network for preserving disappearing dialects and traditions. Without the Folklore Archive in Belojarskij, it is likely that the history of Hungarians' linguistic relatives would have turned out differently…

The work of the folklore archive

The fundamental principle of the folklore archive is that instead of having distant, foreign institutions conduct random expeditions, it is preferable for northern peoples to document their ethnic information base themselves. They should do so in a way that meets their own needs for cultural development and allows for future academic research. This is only feasible if every river region (that is, dialect) has two to three local mid-level academic professionals stationed within that region's main town or settlement, and these individuals are dedicated to professionally gathering materials from within their own natural environment.

A small city with a natural gas compressor station, Belojarskij has existed for barely twenty years and has a population of 14,000; it is located along the lower reaches of the Kazym River, an eastern tributary of the Northern Ob River. It marks the border between the Kazym, who herd reindeer, and the Ob Khanty, who raise horses and face the threat of assimilation. Its folklore archive is the first completely independent academic institution in history where both education and research are conducted in Khanty. Its five employees were trained by Éva Schmidt and completed their education at the Herzen University in Saint Petersburg. Their activities are as follows:

1. ***Field collection***. With attention to the critical state of traditional culture, there are no restrictions on the materials that are collected. The focus is on folklore, the ancient worldview, and traditional cults, which can only be gathered from the older generation. In addition, any kind of information related to ethnography, genealogy, local history, or linguistics should also be documented. The sites of collection are assigned based on the employees' places of origin, and every summer, Éva Schmidt conducts expeditions to more remote areas

(at her own expense). Recording is done with a tape recorder and, at least in part, with an 8mm video camera (including for linguistic data collection).

2. *Database collection*. In the interest of developing Khanty academic research, the archive collects, copyrights, and preserves all kinds of information on Ob-Ugric topics. This is how the archive has collected materials ranging from Finnish phonograph recordings from 1903 to audio materials and manuscript contents of earlier expeditions, as well as academic literature, amateur writings, copies of recordings, etc.

3. *Archiving*. Copies of video recordings are produced in VHS and audio formats, and working copies are created of the most valuable tape recordings.

4. *Audiovisual materials*. As the need arises, edited versions of tape recordings and subtitled video materials on specific topics are produced for educational purposes, with independent copyrights.

5. *Processing and translation of materials*. The collected materials are transcribed by Éva Schmidt using phonemic transcription and by archive employees using the Cyrillic alphabet with diacritics. After editing and including annotations, the collector types up the materials on the computer. Materials that are selected for publication are translated into Russian.

6. *Cyrillic transcription and annotation of source publications*. With the goal of establishing a professional-level philological study of Khanty, Éva Schmidt works in collaboration with various local academic institutions. After appropriate fieldwork, she reviews the published heroic epics from the previous century, transcribes the source materials into Cyrillic with diacritics, and provides Khanty annotations. Audio or video recordings of the materials and their supporting commentary serve to advance the field of Finno-Ugric studies in Hungary.

7. *Education*. Under the direction of Éva Schmidt, philological training is provided to Northern Khanty and Mansi mid-level academic professionals: Cyrillic transcription, interpretation of academic transcription, history of the field, source analysis, and linguistics. Technical training includes tape recorder use, photography and videography techniques, editing, and use of the ChiWriter and Winword computer programs.

8. ***Network of amateur collectors***. Individuals interested in folk traditions can be found both among the intellectual class living in the countryside and among the relatives of informants. After a brief training, the archive provides these individuals with tape recorders and creates archival copies of their recordings.

9. ***Relearning of folklore***. The archive was the first institution to incorporate the reeducation of the middle and youngest generations into its official program. With the help of audiovisual materials, these generations learn prose narrative, personal songwriting, sections of the bear ceremony repertoire, dances, etc. Many of the employees belong to folklore performance groups.

10. ***Mass media***. The local Khanty radio broadcast is recorded in the archive, and folklore recordings are often played on the main Khanty radio station and published in the Khanty newspaper.

11. ***Public service***. Copies of written and audio materials are created for ethnic institutions, informants, and their relatives.

The activities listed above make it possible for any Khanty person who possesses intelligence and a high school diploma to contribute meaningfully rather than letting his or her talents go to waste. Individuals can preserve and develop their ethnic culture while also providing the raw materials for academic research, and they can do so without the risks they would face in foreign cities and academic circles.

Funding and supporters of the folklore archive

Without high-level support, this archive in the middle of the taiga would have never been established. On the host side, the institution was supported by the leadership of the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug; the leadership of the Institute of the Peoples of the North; Messrs. V. M. Kurikov, A. M. Konstantinov, and M. G. Lazarev; the organization Association to Save Yugra; the Research Institute for Revival of the Ob-Ugric Peoples[1]; and the top Ob-Ugric intellectuals.

On the Hungarian side, the archive enjoys the personal support of the president of the republic, Árpád Göncz. The agreement was made possible by the sacrifices made by the Secretariat of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Ethnology, and the establishment of the

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[1] Editor's note: Known today as the Ob-Ugric Institute of Applied Research and Development.

archive was possible thanks to the help of Bertalan Andrásfalvy, minister of education. Research equipment is provided on an annual basis through the help of the minister and secretary of education, the International Relations Department of the Ministry of Culture and Public Education, and other employees. Special thanks go to the Hungarian Cultural Center in Moscow, under the leadership of Rita Mayer, for its support. The computer programs were developed by the Institute of Linguistics at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and an employee of Chemokomplex. Transportation has been provided by TNT Airways and the Chemokomplex corporation, and winter clothing by the Ministry of Defense. In practical organizational matters, Eszter Ruttkay-Miklián, the Reguly Association, and the Jószolgálat Foundation have helped the most, and support has of course also been provided by the country's various Finno-Ugric studies and ethnography departments and research institutes.

The Northern Khanty Folklore Archive of Belojarskij is grateful to everyone whose support has made the archive's work possible, despite the challenges it faces.

The archive currently has two computers, two VHS video-editing tools, three 38mm video cameras, and eight tape recorders. On an annual basis, the archive requires approximately $1,000 USD from Hungary for supplies.

The greatest problem facing the archive is that the lease for its physical premises could be terminated at any moment. A three-bedroom apartment was renovated at significant cost to serve the purposes of this institution. Along with the end of the management employment contract, the end of the lease could lead to the complete dissolution of the archive. Given that even institutions of much less importance in the same city have purchased their own premises, the archive will not be safe until this space is under its own ownership. The cost is about $25,000 USD, and this funding must be secured – through international cooperation, if need be – to ensure that the first Khanty folklore archive, its unique repository of information, and its trained professionals do not fall victim to any administrative changes.

In terms of equipment, the archive is seeking a donor or financial sponsor to acquire the following items:
- 1 computer
- 1 Xerox machine
- 1 gasoline-powered generator to allow video recording of the oldest informants in spaces without electricity, such as during the bear ceremony and other similarly important performances

The employees of the folklore archive[2]

Rima K. Seburova (Slepenkova): deputy head of the institution
Great Ob Khanty, previously employed as a sales clerk, and in her last year of university.
Journalist, videographer, folklore collector, and producer of the Khanty radio broadcast.

Sofia S. Lozjamova (Uspenskaja): research fellow
Kazym Khanty, previously employed in cultural outreach, trained in music, and currently a university student.
Folklore collector trained in phonemic transcription.

Tamara R. Pjatnikova: research fellow and administrator
Great Ob Khanty, previously employed as an educator with administrative experience, and in her last year of university.
Translator of specialized texts.

Ljudmila L. Lelʹkhova (Khomljak): research fellow and general manager
Great Ob Khanty, previously employed as an accountant.
Folklore collector.

Ljudmila D. Dolgušina (Kotova), librarian.
Khanty-Russian, previously employed as an educator, and currently a college student.
Proofreader and copy editor of Russian.

(English translation by Melinda Széll)

The Archetype of the "Archive":
Reflections on a New Type of Institution
and Its Contemporary Problems
(2001)

When in the early 1980s, with the help of N.V. Lukina, the famous ethnographer from Tomsk, I first formulated the plan for a Khanty academic institution dedicated to the preservation of folklore and particularly important cultural information, I called it an "archive" purely out of caution. In those days, traditional culture, continuity, and ethnic and linguistic independence were considered anti-values of sorts, and so the term "archive" seemed neutral and vague enough to avoid conflict. Much to my surprise, in 1989, the 25th session of the United Nations General Conference recommended establishing the very same kind of "archives" as a main institution for preserving folklore (that is, the traditional information of specific communities). The extremely urgent need to save collective knowledge and develop special institutions for this purpose is a new concept not just for the native peoples of Western Siberia but also for most of humanity at the turn of the 21st century, and so it is especially relevant now to review the basic principles of archival work. In parts 1 and 2 of this paper, I examine the basic foundations of the concept of the archive for Ob-Ugric society, and in part 3 I discuss its specific implications at the present moment. All aspects of the topic are approached from the perspective of information processes.

1.1. The concept of an "archive"

The word "archive" traditionally refers to an institution that preserves documents. This, of course, presupposes the existence of a system for transferring information to a durable format, such as capturing linguistic

information in writing. Archives (and institutions that serve a similar purpose) have long existed, and they share a common origin with libraries, dating back to the period before the printing press. The basic structures and mechanisms of such institutions reflect the deepest structures and functions of the human psyche – they are archetypes in the Jungian sense of the word. This explains why, when the field of information technology developed as an independent science in the twentieth century, the world of computers naturally adopted the technical terms of archives and libraries (for example, library, archive, document, file, folder, etc.). If we consider the fact that there is not a single developed society that has no archives, it becomes clear: archives serve an indispensable function. Let us review what we know about the traditional archive.

Archives can typically be divided into two types: (1) the archives or collections of specific institutions (or individuals) and (2) independent archives. The organizational structure of the administrative archive can be seen as a historical model of archival work. In the course of their work, local organizations and institutions create records, and they are required to register and preserve certain types of information for a specific period of time. Once this period elapses, a normative framework is used to decide which documents can be destroyed and which ones should continue to be preserved or should be transferred to another institution. Archives of the second type do not themselves produce documents but instead specialize in accepting, collecting, redistributing, processing, and storing information for the long term. In this way, the State Archive network [in Russia], for example, receives materials primarily of an administrative and legal nature but also accepts all other kinds of written and graphical materials: personal correspondence, diaries, works of art, manuscripts of academic works, unique collections, etc. A similar system is used within most domains or specialties to handle their own collections of information. In the world of material culture, the equivalent of an archive is the museum; in the natural world, it is the conservation area, national park, or gene bank.

As society and information technology have developed, the systems and operations of archives have grown so complex that archive-related knowledge itself has become an ***independent science***.

1.2. Features of an archive

An archive can be identified by the following specific features:
- An archive is a specialized institution for the collection, processing, and long-term storage of information. Apart from processing information,

the archive itself is neither the creator nor the end user of the information it stores. Instead, it is the **distributor** or intermediary.

- It deals with *repeatedly "coded,"* man-made information (for example, spoken information) that is captured through a specific means (such as writing) and physical medium (such as paper, film, computer disks, etc.). [*Coding:* In order to move specific pieces of information across space and time, the most important parameters (as if a model) must be transferred to a different medium and translated according to the rules of certain modeling systems. This process can be considered coding or encryption of the information.]
- When information enters an archive, the standard by which it is judged is not its current thematic value and demand but rather its *future potential*.
- An archive deals with information that has *limited availability* in the present and in the future.
- An archive handles information whose value increases with the passage of time.
- In light of the features listed above, access to archival information is restricted and *regulated* by special rules.
- The work of an archive involves: (1) the content of the information (such as its transcription, decoding, and translation), (2) the information sphere (descriptions, catalogues, indices), (3) the technical sphere (restoration, preservation, and transfer to another format), and (4) the social sphere (serving and educating the archive's users).
- Preservation is not an end unto itself: the archive promotes the *reactivation of information and reconnection of this information to society* (publication of primary source materials, creation of educational materials, etc.).

These and similar factors describe the archives of civilized societies. Interestingly, the accumulation of outdated information does not harm the dynamics of a society; to the contrary, the strength of a society can be judged based on the state of its archives. A good example of this is England, which had no less passion for collecting its own information than it did for acquiring new lands. As a result, England figures as a cultural world power, in the cradle of contemporary civilization processes, simply because it was better able than many to document itself at the time. Similarly, in the new era, the most dynamic of the developed Eastern nations have had the greatest appreciation for disappearing information, such as Japan, where the tradition of documentation dates back thousands of years.

It is difficult to measure the future usefulness of archival information, but there is one function it serves under all circumstances: the ***self-identification of society***.

Today, when the "touches" of civilization have managed to shatter the traditional world of all ethnic groups, we must adapt the "touches" of academic research, archival science, and documentation technology to the psyche and information system of threatened societies. After all, these societies had all these vital functions but in different forms. It is important to recognize and understand this so that in trying to help these societies we do not end up causing even more harm.

2.1. Contemporary information processes among the Ob-Ugric peoples

In the twentieth century, it can be said that the natural flow of ethnic information has itself become an archival rarity. The culture of the Ob-Ugric peoples – as has been the case for many other ethnic groups in similar situations – was undermined by boarding school education, which involved forced use of the Russian language, by the destruction of traditional settlements during the period of the kolkhoz consolidation, and by a fatal influx of outside populations during industrialization. This situation has been compounded by the global phenomena of the new millennium: mass communication, the universal spread of information technology, and globalization – that is, another campaign of reprogramming cultures and souls. If we assume that the knowledge base of the Northern Ob Khanty in the 1940s was, for example, approximately 80 percent indigenous and 20 percent foreign, we could now say that the ratio for today's youth is 20 percent indigenous information and 80 percent foreign information. ***It is clear that the culture that developed naturally over the course of thousands of years, with its language and traditional foundation of information, exists in its entirety only among the generation born in the 1940s or earlier.*** If this information now disappears, the information foundation of the Ob-Ugric ethnicity will be lost.

At the same time, the civilized world grew interested in traditional culture and indigenous peoples on an international scale. Academic disciplines and research institutes began to divvy up their spheres of research and influence, the number of expeditions from countries around the world grew rapidly, and materials old and new started to be published. The mass training of ethnic minorities at the secondary and higher education level began, and

academic centers for training researchers quickly formed. By the mid-1990s, a modern network of mass communication and ethnic broadcasts had been established in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug. As the new millennium approached, the intellectual classes of ethnic minorities increasingly began to take the education of youth into their own hands, along with academic study of their own culture and publication of ethnic information.

As a result of these new circumstances, members of the older Ob-Ugric generation have begun to lose their traditional cautiousness and shyness. They have gradually become used to being asked about earlier times and grown used to recording equipment, media appearances, and trips abroad – partly because all of this has reached them by way of their young relatives. Most of them continue to believe that the Ob-Ugric world in which they grew up will never return and that their native language also faces slim chances of survival. Individuals differ only in how they react to these prospects. Some are angry about the unprecedented – and tragically overdue – about-face that the outside world has made towards Ob-Ugric ancient traditions and spirituality. Others, in contrast, are inspired to use new tools to document their life experiences "for history," or they themselves seek out researchers or reporters to whom they can demonstrate their performance skills. The best ones adopt a mentor's mindset, but they are selective about whom they choose as a student, only performing and providing explanations to individuals they deem trustworthy.

Until recently it was typical that, for example, it might take a hundred years for a piece of Khanty folklore to be published abroad, and the material would never return to the people or social environment from which it had originated. Today, publication of any information takes little time, and if it is in an accessible format, its "consumers" may include not only the native Ugric population but also the other ethnic groups they live alongside. We can best understand the purpose and function of an archive if we imagine a huge spinning wheel containing the world's information and within it a translucent speck of dust representing the Ob-Ugric world.

2.2. Ethnic groups and the archive

Through the course of history, whenever an ethnic group would develop the need to document its own ***folk culture*** in writing, its scribes would typically begin with folklore: songs and stories. Why? In nonliterate societies, these

artistic forms served as a way to preserve the most important information in the collective memory. Scribes would follow the exact same model and principle discussed here. The wealth of "folk" information is endless. In the past, when scribes had the opportunity to decide which information to transfer to this new and more permanent medium, thus strengthening and expanding the status of this information, they would instinctively seek out the same types of information that previous generations had selected and preserved. The information varies in its importance and validity, depending on the function and specific form of its underlying structure. These works of folklore, refined over the centuries, condense massive fields of information and energy through ***symbolization*** and other mechanisms; they express such profound, essential moments of the ethnic group's identity and spirituality that it would be difficult to capture them otherwise. It is no accident that the word "folklore," which means "knowledge of the people," has in many languages come to refer specifically to collectively composed oral traditions. In some cases, the words "folklore" and "ethnic" are almost synonyms. It is perfectly natural, therefore, to call an independent ethnic archive a "folklore" archive, as happened with the first Khanty archive.

We are dealing with two factors here:

1. The *archive* as a system and institution for managing information.
2. The *ethnic group* as the creator and consumer of both the information and the archive.

In the following sections, as we survey the contemporary responsibilities of the archive, these concepts will become clearer: the folklore archive is the institution for preserving disappearing ethnic information. Before we reach later conclusions, one fact about ethnicity must be mentioned. It is obvious that the information that archives choose not to record today because of its insufficiently traditional or ethnic nature may be sought out in the future, but by then it will be in the inaccessible past. From the perspective of ethnicity, ***any information*** that relates to the ethnic group may be important, and the ethnic group has a right to this kind of information. In the case of small ethnic groups, the collection and preservation of traditional ethnic information is the first, indispensable stage in the creation of new information spheres. However, it is already time to plan for the second stage, when all other information pertaining to the ethnic group will need to be gathered so that the ethnic group can control its destiny.

For small ethnic groups whose populations number in the tens of thousands, follow an early social structure, and have a knowledge base

that is scattered across regions and institutions beyond where they live, ***the ethno-archive is the optimal type of institution for managing their own information.*** It combines the functions of many other types of institutions into a single institution. It not only deals with traditional ethnic information, much like a contemporary folklore archive, but it also centralizes all other types of information related to that ethnic group.

2.3. Scientific research and the archive

The process of self-preservation among indigenous peoples follows the universal law of the inseparability of energy and information. This requires, on the one hand, continuous social activity, which frees suppressed life forces and produces new relationships and communities, and on the other, an unending process of self-reflection, in which the only information that can remain on the surface in a culture-forming role is that which the group is aware of and reworks into the encoding system of the new era. The latter knowledge process is currently identified in folk consciousness as part of the archetypal concept of ***"Science"*** and is associated with the creation of writing (as an expression of the world order), regardless of how science is understood in academia today. The principle of active engagement and general interest in ethnic topics facilitate the ***internal, unconscious realization of the archetype*** in wider society: a growing number of intellectuals from ethnic minorities imagine themselves writing academic works and explaining their own culture to the wider world. It is natural that any individual or institution engaged in such activities will begin to accumulate information, and personal and collective "archives" will develop. But what is the difference between an archive with an ethnic focus and an academic research institute?

Archival work and academic research are inseparable, but they do have distinct information spheres and orientations. In our case, a gap of thousands of years separates the ethnic "world" of the archive's focus from the civilization that developed this modern field of scientific research. We hope that in the coming cosmic age of science, this contradiction will be lessened. In the current transitional period, the situation is as follows. The primary space of information and energy, which the ethno-archive is responsible for monitoring and managing, originally served as the only possible way to regenerate the ethnic group itself, its culture, and its "world." The information and energy sphere represented by science is responsible for modeling and influencing

reality exclusively according to the rules of its own system. Anything can be the subject of science to the extent that science is aware of it and identifies it as such. Regarding information: in traditional societies, the main role of information in the everyday reproduction of the group's own ethnic world is played by the ***mechanisms of optimal recursion***, while in the case of science it is the exact opposite: the ***mechanisms of optimal replacement***. Science, as a special system of knowledge, always strives to replace earlier pieces of information with new information. Ancient ancestral systems of knowledge make no sharp distinction between the knower and the object of knowledge. As an essential part of the ethnic group, the archive must model the object of knowledge, integrating its rules and structures into a single unified system along with its own internal structures. In other words, it must adapt as much as possible to the collective unconscious "preprogrammed" dynamic of information processes. This poses a rather significant limitation for understanding and using the information, since these processes include unconscious "encoding" mechanisms for selecting and distributing information, such as the development of symbols. Traditional institutions of the "ancestral world" can serve as the best models for developing norms around handling archival information. Examples of these institutions include holy places, the ceremonies of the ghost dance and bear ceremony, various other ceremonies, the memorial for the dead, and the ethics of relating to older individuals with two to three degrees of kinship. In archival work, it is preferable to keep knowledge bases as "clean" as possible – that is, avoid relying on outside theories, methodologies, objectives, and anything that might artificially influence the flow of information. Furthermore, science, as the cognitive "metasystem" of post-feudal societies, operates according to its own normative system (such as the rules of validity) and rejects other normative systems (such as ethics, aesthetics, and sacredness). As for the knowledge base, scientific research seeks unlimited access to information and demands the right to obtain necessary information from any system.

Naturally, all of this does not mean that a great distance exists between archival work and scientific research. Research centers create endless archival records, and endless research is done within archives. The purpose of a research center is to produce ***academic works*** (e.g., monographs, reports, etc.). Contemporary academic research can require 50 to 80 percent of its information to come from non-primary sources (such as theoretical materials, literature reviews, and analogies used to support a claim, etc.). The fundamental purpose of an archive, on the other hand, is to ***map and reproduce a knowledge base from primary sources***. If it were possible,

the archive would reproduce the living world of the ethnic group in its entirety, not just materially but also in the information sphere, excluding the influence of all external modeling systems. In information theory, this difference is expressed as follows: information that exists as the internal quality of a given system is different from information that that same system transmits about itself to an external recipient.

3. The current problems of folklore archives in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug

Now let us turn to more concrete questions. In order to evaluate any informational or symbolic phenomena, we need clear answers to the basic questions of the communication model: *who* and *from where*; *from whom*, *what*, and *for whom*; *where to* and *for what purpose*. In accordance with this model, I will therefore outline the most pressing questions.

3.1. Who?

Before something is preserved, someone must decide to preserve it; before something is transmitted, someone must choose to transmit it. Under normal circumstances, it is the ethnic group itself that takes responsibility for its own continuity, passing on information in different ways. When writing was the only means for preserving spoken information in a physical format, it was only rare individuals who immortalized Ob-Ugric culture in this way. But with the current state of technology, anyone who can press a button on a device can transmit information to posterity.

When the establishment of folklore archives as a new type of institution in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug first began, they were founded and maintained thanks to individual initiative and effort – and this remains true to this day. But now that these archives have begun to form a whole network, it is time to consider who should work in them and what knowledge is required to do so.

3.1.1. Categories of "documenters"

People from ethnic populations who are active in folklore archives can be grouped into the following categories:

1. Leading academic researchers (with university and postgraduate degrees). Their main activities are establishing and leading the archive, producing academic works, and, often as a secondary responsibility, archival documentation. Examples include the main staff of the Scientific Research Institute of Eastern Ob-Ugric Peoples [known today as the Ob-Ugric Institute of Applied Research and Development] in Khanty-Mansijsk, and some of the founders of archives outside the city.
2. Academic personnel of the archives (with university degrees). Their primary activity is collecting and processing information, and their secondary responsibility is academic publication.
3. Routine external collectors (usually with a high school education), individually trained in documentation and transcription. The archive provides them with supplies and sometimes wages. Most in this category only produce audio recordings, but the best among them also transcribe and, less frequently, translate and annotate their materials, or even participate in the academic analysis of the materials.
4. Occasional external collectors. They only produce audio recordings.

At the present moment the middle two categories are the most relevant to examine further.

3.1.2. Qualifications and personal characteristics of archive employees

Hiring leading academics to perform everyday archival work is a luxury in conflict with temporal and spatial conditions. In areas closer to where ethnic populations live, the employees of district archives can manage information without being as overburdened. These are professionals in their field and creators of the new history of the ethnic group. Unfortunately, there is not a single institution of higher education that prepares them for this work, nor is it easy to find training in professional transcription, textual analysis, or source identification. The silver lining is that when one is collecting and interpreting information, it is not necessarily academic and theoretical knowledge that is as useful as familiarity with the local society and topic in question, as well as one's curiosity and ability to model the informant's way of thinking. Versatility is necessary for archival work – one must be simultaneously skilled in working with people, information, and technology. When such an employee is found, this person must be strongly supported.

Working with information is of course an endless task, and every day an immeasurable amount of information is lost simply because it is not discovered in time. It would be of great help to those working in this area to

receive some form of brief, specialized training. Up to this point, both archival work and education about it have sprung up spontaneously. Although it is not ideal for local archives to face external interference in their work, it would still be useful for the professionals in charge to pass on their experience in the form of methodological tools, questionnaires, educational cassettes, etc. It is absolutely necessary to establish ***an official academic forum*** for archives, which would cover best practices, continuing education courses, etc.

Work that employees do not have time to do is left to their trusted local researchers in the field. In much the same way that Ob-Ugric society has begun to understand and accept the purpose of archives, a network of amateur researchers can increasingly be counted on to collect source materials. They are provided with training, supplies, and compensation by the leaders and financial departments of local archives. It is long overdue to start a centrally organized movement of collectors, put out a call for participation to all who may be interested, and organize and train participants in an ***official organization***. It is true that a greater number of people increases the risk of unprofessional handling of information, corruption of informants, conflicts of interest, and similarly undesirable outcomes, but with the dangerously rapid pace of cultural change, there is no better alternative for preserving large amounts of information.

3.1.3. *Types of communication networks and the collector's attitude*

If we take into consideration the fact that archives also collaborate with individuals outside the ethnic group, the categories of documenters listed above can be doubled. All of this reflects just one side of communication; the informant is on the other side. Different types of relationships between researchers and informants can develop in various ways in given local communities (taking into consideration norms of behavior). These types are based on social categorization and the system of similar social relations. The quantity and quality of gathered information can be affected by factors such as the degree of familial connection between the researcher and informant, familiarity, social status and profession, as well as ethnic and other group identities. The folklore archive is the kind of institution in which it is possible to form long-lasting relationships with informants, with the support of natural forms of communication, such as documenting conversations with close relatives within the family context.

Every relationship or situation involving communication requires a certain attitude from the partners involved; the approach and results depend in large

part on this. In terms of the quality of information provided to archive employees, the optimal model is when a younger relative of the same sex as the informant expresses interest in something with the goal of reproducing the subject of the information. The skill and intention on the part of the collector to repeat or creatively recreate the received information and its subject are fundamentally important not just because this results in receiving the most detailed information. The archive is also a place where certain elements of culture (such as holidays, rituals, and folklore repertoires) can be reborn, and the collection of archival information guarantees the constant operation of the institution.

3.2. From where?

This question touches on one of the most important topics in the ethnocultural sphere.

3.2.1. The regional factor

The question of region or territory is one of the most important factors, because an ethnic group's culture and language exist exclusively in forms related to a geographic territory. Among the Ob-Ugric peoples, we can speak of many virtually distinct peoples, due to linguistic differences (those from the furthest groups cannot understand each other and struggle to consider themselves part of the same ethnic group). Accordingly, the local group of speakers of a dialect, depending on population size, can be considered to constitute the basic social and cultural unit of an ethnic group. ***This is a unit of information, a "microcosm," in which the information foundation is optimally simple.*** It would be natural for archives to come into existence based on this ethno-social principle and for every local group to hire its own expert. However, this is not yet feasible. Employees, who are usually women, do not always live in their own group's area, and they are not trained based on the regional principle but instead their training reflects the goals of public education and academic research. Thus, the archives do not just gather materials from local groups but also materials from other groups. The systematic organization of these materials (one of the functions of an archive is to create descriptions, catalogs, and indices) is indispensable; otherwise, it would be impossible to collect the materials of a single group that have been scattered across various places.

The archive is a **regional institution** simply because it is impossible to hire outside experts in sufficient numbers and at a sufficient rate to match the speed with which information is disappearing. At an organizational level, it would be optimal to have a system in which a network of archives is centrally funded and managed and must be present in any district where the native population reaches a certain threshold. Region does not just refer to the physical location of a cultural variant but also denotes numerous qualitative characteristics that are related.

3.2.2. Cultural conservation status of local ethnic groups

Due to intensive assimilation, the scope and methods of an archive depend on the status and chances for survival of the ethnic group's culture and language in a given region. Today we can count about five different types:

1. Sufficient – the ethnic group constitutes more than 70 percent of the population in the region, the population is not very mixed, the traditional lifestyle and worldview are dominant, and the native language is spoken among every age group. Only among the youth do people speak Russian to one another. Members of the older and middle generations are capable of composing and performing works of folklore. (Examples include the Synja Khanty and the Khanty of the Upper Kazym.)
2. Intermediate – this has two subtypes: in one type, society has few foreigners, but traditional culture is disappearing, and in the other, the ethnic group has shrunk to less than 20 percent of the population. The older generation is familiar with the traditional lifestyle and religion, members of the older and middle generations know their native language, and older people even use it amongst themselves and are able to compose and perform folklore. (Examples include the Khanty of the Kunovat River and the Ob Khanty near the village of Polnovat.)
3. Disappearing – the ethnic group is represented by a small proportion of people in society, and traditional culture has been destroyed. Members of the older generation do not regularly use their native language, the middle generation has only passive knowledge of the language, and the youth do not know the language at all. Some performers of folklore are still alive, but they are the last ones who still have this skill. (Examples include the Šerkal Khanty and Ob Mansi.)

4. Sporadic – a few lonely older speakers exist within basically assimilated groups (such as the Nizjam Khanty).
5. Assimilated – local residents consider themselves members of the native population without knowing the language or culture.

At the present moment it is vital to **distinguish the groups** that are more or less in a satisfactory state from those in which the potential to document the culture and language may disappear in the near future. Even though our foundational principle is to adapt to natural structures and processes as much as possible, it is worth making an exception for the sake of these groups. It is a law of nature that the strong become stronger, even at the expense of the weak. Humans are more than animals, and this is clearly shown by the fact that a hundred years ago, Finn linguists developed special programs to preserve endangered Southern Khanty groups.

Types 2 through 4 require special measures: first of all, we must consider the topic of the information separately from its linguistic formulation. The gift of oratory skills does not always coincide with knowledge of specific information; exemplary speech must be recorded in great volume regardless of the topic, whereas for important information, the speaker's language proficiency and rhetorical style are secondary. It is worth hiring members of the same ethnic group for this work. In the case of categories 3 and 4, **special dialectological programs** are necessary, at least for the purposes of documenting grammar and vocabulary. The worse condition the local culture is in, the more professional expertise is required to research it. External experts, linguists, and ethnographers can be hired for this work – the task is special enough to attract the attention of researchers.

3.3. From whom?

3.3.1. Age

Informants are categorized based on various traits: ethnicity, age, social parameters (sex, degree of kinship, function, status), quality and quantity of their knowledge (their folklore repertoire and knowledge of social, practical, and historical information), personal characteristics, etc. We are only discussing here the issues that have been identified through the course of our work as especially important to the current stage of archival research. Age is an important factor because of the intensity of linguistic and cultural

change. It is important to maintain records of all who were born before 1935 and share their information with collectors who can document materials from them on the basis of personal connections. Informants who speak other languages or belong to other ethnicities are also valuable. In terms of the cohort born between 1935 and 1950, we can be more selective based on their knowledge of specific topics or based on other personal reasons. This is the most promising opportunity for representatives of the group to document themselves; we just need to find the forum in which this can occur. Youth and children are not within archives' area of interest, but now is the time for archives to coordinate with educational institutions to create copies of their best work in the interest of archiving them.

3.3.2. Function and role in communication

This concept refers to the functional relationship between the informant and the partner to whom he or she is transmitting information. This relationship develops spontaneously based on personal characteristics, social traits, and knowledge of the material. In earlier types of societies, it is clearly evident how the cultural model is "superimposed" onto certain leading individuals, who, through a complex normative process, distribute relevant information to other members of the community. This can explain the fact, mentioned previously, that even though the ethnic group currently views the function of (self-)knowledge as "science," communication serves more of a ***training*** or ***educational*** function, depending on whether the informant sees the partner receiving the information as a student or younger relative (or both), or a ***performative*** function, if the partner is seen as an audience. Through the research process, leading personalities have emerged in society, along with their subtypes: "wise grandmother," "teacher," "storyteller," etc. If we bring these individuals together with partners they like, an endless stream of lectures and performances can be collected from them. This trend has now begun, as shown by the rivalry among minority intellectuals to gather information from specific prominent informants.

3.4. What to document?

The answer to the question of what to document is simple: everything. The only preferences are about what should be recorded immediately and what can wait until later. Archives up to this point have specialized primarily in

oral information, since the other aspects of life are already documented by a number of other experts. Regardless of the topic, it is the ***linguistic form of expression*** that is documented. And on this note, let us take a brief detour.

3.4.1. Features of linguistic information and its analysis

In the course of linguistic communication, reality is reflected as information in the informant's consciousness, and this information, with the help of a special modeling system of symbols – language – takes the form of a verbal message. "Coding" of the information occurs through images and concepts. Besides language, other modeling systems also play a role, such as religious and aesthetic perspectives. For "decoding" – that is, correctly interpreting the information – it is imperative to have sufficient knowledge of reality and various modeling systems. Specifically, only the "surface" of the message is recorded, such as sounds and gestures. However, this shell can become an increasingly decisive factor as time passes and it grows detached from reality and the communication context, and images change. The correct (ideally professional) interpretation of linguistic material is one of the ***basic requirements*** of a functioning archive. Academic analysis requires that the collected materials be fully explored, but archival work does not typically allow enough time to do so. Here it is necessary to record ***key points*** in relation to reality, images, and interpretations.

The question inevitably arises: Who in the future will understand a message in an Ob-Ugric language? Because today we are, in spite of everything, creating recordings with the goal of documenting a disappearing culture that has been around for thousands of years, but there are not enough people able to decode or translate it. In one or two generations (30 to 60 years), who can we ask, "How should this be pronounced or translated?" It can be expected that the deciphering of audio recordings and phonograms, which is considered by all except linguists to be auxiliary work, will in the future be the special profession of "chosen ones" with strong backgrounds in computer science (such as computer-assisted phonetic analysis, musical notation, and search tools that select for vocabulary, folklore motifs, and other parameters). Incidentally, the advantage of documenting in one's native language is that it slows down alienation of information from the ethnic group and prevents other undesirable effects from external market forces. In any case, it provides a clear path and goal for descendants who wish to join the world of their ancestors.

3.4.2. Thematic and genre considerations

It is ***folklore*** that must be preserved first of all. Although it is the most representative part of culture – to the point that it represents life and existence in general, as formulated in the sacred phrase "if my song, my story goes on…" – it is, unfortunately, the first to disappear. It is worth noting that among many peoples the term "folklore" typically refers to folk art, including music, dance, and sometimes decorative and applied arts, since these are in fact inseparable in daily life. But it is also important to document genealogy, land and natural resource management, rituals, work methods and processes – in short, everything within the scope of ethnic studies (ethnography, history, etc.). The archive is primarily focused on traditional culture, and the research of newer phenomena is considered the domain of other fields. At the same time, however, archives are also effective in documenting contemporary trends, because their employees are present at various events and are active in academic life.

Unstructured verbal communication tends to take stereotypical forms that are similar to ***genres***. Every ethnic group has its own versions of genres, and if in the course of communication we find the verbal keys that lead to a genre, we can then discover a wealth of valuable information. One such example is the "personal (family and clan) history" genre, in which the conversation is not just about understanding a series of events but is also about the person and the community in which the "personal (family, etc.) sphere" is reflected: places and their significance to the person in question, "the mythological world of some character" – that is, the system of verbal and visual information created about the person in the context of the given culture. Today a perspectival genre is emerging that features amateur storylines about ethnic identity, and it is captured in writing or using modern media (videos, tape recorders, etc.).

In addition to its own materials, an archive must also collect and copy ***any information of public interest*** about the group in that region, regardless of its source and medium but not without attention to copyright.

3.5. With what?

Archives do not always have professional technical equipment at their disposal. It would certainly be preferable to have digital versions of these tools, but the majority of earlier recordings, as well as materials from

external collectors, have also been recorded with amateur tools. Currently, every archive would need at least a Pentium computer and digital (minidisc) recording device, as far as digital technical tools are concerned. Email and internet service can be assumed to be available. Archives undoubtedly require technicians, and staff (most of whom are female) need individual training on how to use the capabilities of the technology. Field recordings, even those recorded for linguistic purposes, are best recorded on video with an external microphone (on eco mode at a slow speed) rather than with a tape recorder. Even more important than the technical requirements of recording equipment are those of secondary processing (copying and editing) and of storage, which is in fact the most important consideration of all. At its most basic level, any archive must have a ***storage space*** – if possible, one that is ***semiprofessional*** (an enclosed space within a brick structure, controlled for temperature and humidity, with security measures in place). A qualitatively new stage of archiving begins with the operation of a powerful computer that can convert materials recorded on any medium into digital formats (onto CDs and DVDs). This setup allows the possibility of editing fieldwork recordings into a montage of video clips, with captions in the local language, that can be transferred to CDs – the basis for future cultural exposure.

3.6. For whom? For what?

Certainly the most important question when it comes to an archive is this: in the future, who will be its owner and who will use these uniquely valuable materials full of personal relevance? The uncertainty of the future is a concern for both the informant and the researcher alike. If the researcher senses some interest among the younger generation, at least she can dream that her work will continue. But in most areas there is currently not even the faintest trace of hope that the descendants of earlier generations will realize in time the importance of preserving their ancestors' legacy in a worthy manner. It is difficult to imagine a future society and predict the events of the twenty-first century, but it is evident even now that it will be something qualitatively different than it has been up to this point.

Most archive employees do not know where the materials they collect and document will end up. What purposes will they serve, and what will become of them besides printed publications – this is all uncertain, just as the future of the ethnic group itself is unclear. While information is still

fresh, the collector is most unsettled by the idea that someone in the future will use it in a way the collector would not like. The thought that these collections may be carried far away, on one hand, sows mistrust. On the other hand, most collectors eventually begin to imagine an ideal archive, found in a faraway land, trustworthy and neutral in all respects, where copies of one's best materials can remain forever. Many do in fact begin to deposit their recordings in foreign places, whether at an institution in another city or one in another country, and they would even send them, if it were possible, to a different planet.

4. Returning to the archetype

What kind of researchers/guardians are those who discard information instead of collecting it and scatter it far away instead of compiling it in one place? Traitors? Rescuers? What interests are they motivated by? It is possible that some of them have specific plans, practical goals, and some concept of the advantages of sending the information far away. But there are many more who cannot provide a rational explanation for their actions, because they know even less about that ideal faraway archive and its staff and future than they do about those close to them. Most of their ideas are borne from their imagination – to use the technical term from psychology, this is projection. If we begin to analyze them, it is easy to identify the following points: "exceptional value – removal – the border beyond which the 'other side' begins – a sustaining force – a redeeming force – the recipient, who with 100 percent certainty is what he or she must be." This is nothing other than the innate *archetype* of every such continuity and identity that is destined to protect and continue itself. Those who are still capable of sensing the shapes of the spirit world are familiar with the One who regulates arrival and birth on the border of the upper and middle worlds, as well as the One who directs departures and returns on the border of the middle and lower worlds – with their combined efforts, both create today for us, out of yesterday and tomorrow. It is difficult to follow their unspoken laws in the torrent of conflicting interests, but how else will we be able to find the recipient who is exactly as he or she should be???

(English translation by Melinda Széll)